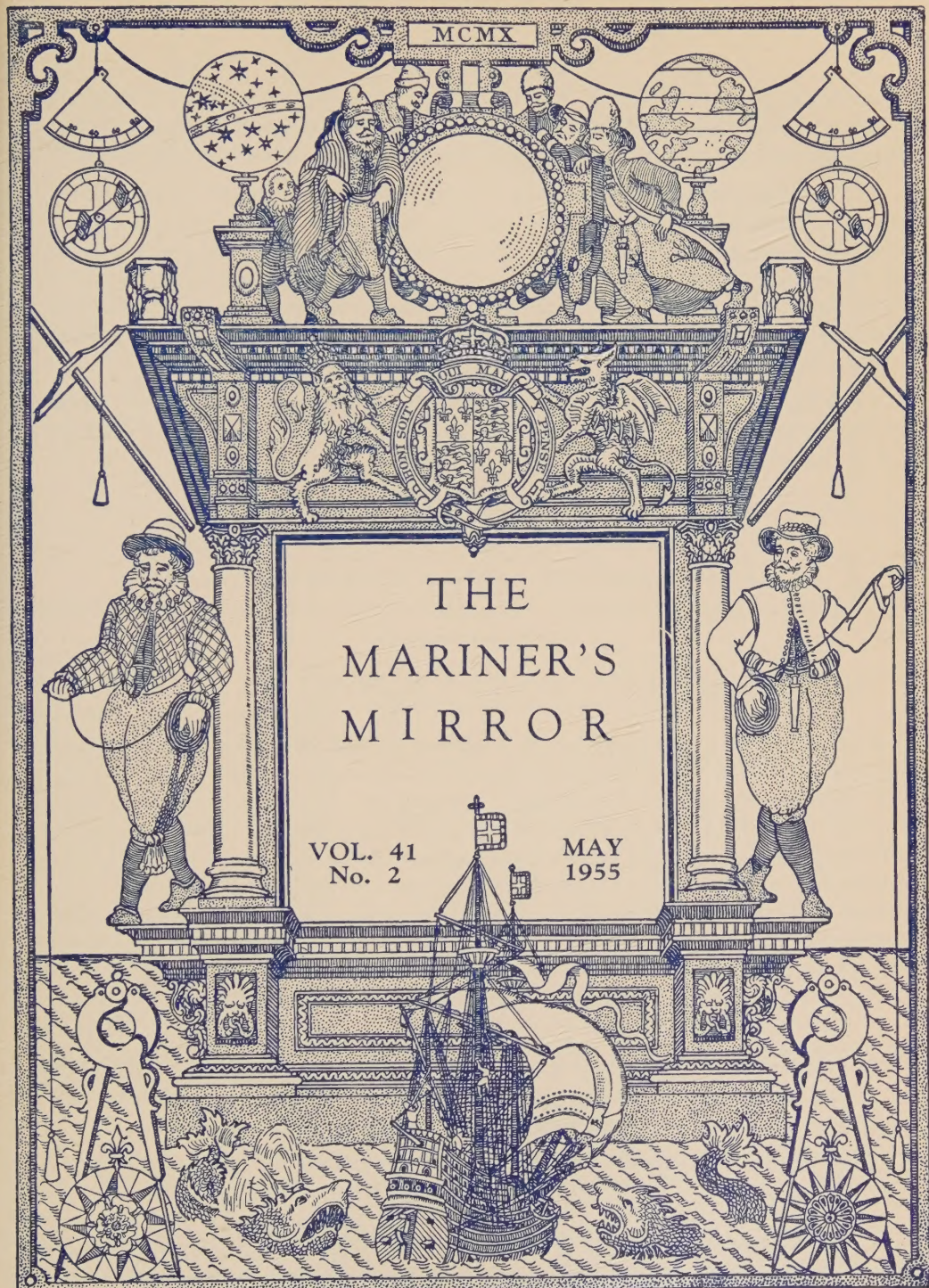


THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL of the SOCIETY FOR NAUTICAL RESEARCH



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To encourage research into nautical antiquities, into matters relating to seafaring and shipbuilding in all ages and among all nations, into the language and customs of the sea, and into other subjects of nautical interest.

The Society has erected a Monument to the Van de Veldes in St James's, Piccadilly, London; raised £107,000 to save Nelson's Flagship and has superintended the restoration of H.M.S. *VICTORY* to her appearance as at the Battle of Trafalgar; paved the way to the establishment of the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich and the *Victory* Museum at Portsmouth; organized exhibitions of Nelson relics and naval prints, etc.; and issued several periodical publications dealing with nautical archaeology, besides an inexpensive set of official plans (ten in number) for building a model of H.M.S. *Victory*.

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## CONTRIBUTIONS TO *THE MARINER'S MIRROR*

The aim of the Society being to arrive at true conclusions through free discussion, it is distinctly to be understood that the Editor is not held responsible for statements made in the *Journal*.

Contributions and correspondence should be addressed to G. R. G. WORCESTER, Esq., *Penny Cottage, Pound Lane, Windlesham, Surrey*. Although not absolutely essential, it would be of great assistance to the Editor and the Printers if articles, notes, queries, answers and reviews of books could be typed, on one side of the paper, preferably quarto, with double-spacing and with a wide margin. Owing to the high costs of production, photographs and line drawings to illustrate contributions must be restricted to a minimum, and very few can be accepted for the present, or until conditions have improved.

Names of ships should be underlined to denote *italics*, and not written within inverted commas.

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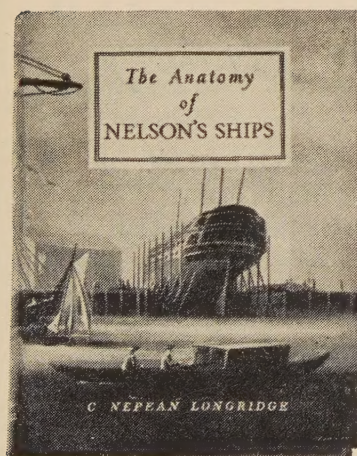
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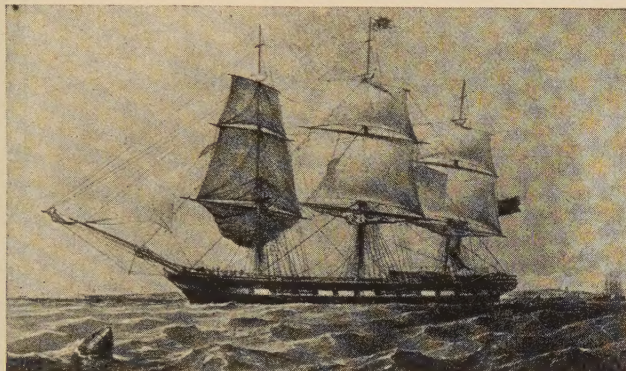
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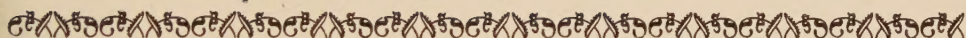
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1955



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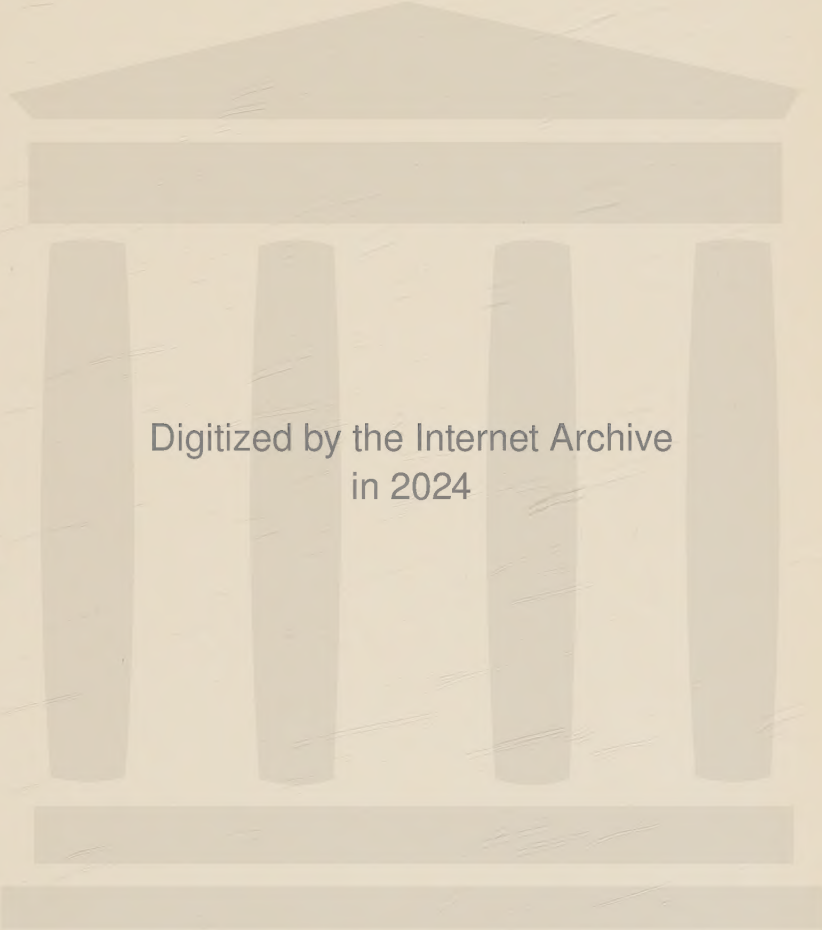
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Flag-officer's 'Dress Sute', 1748-67. Portrait of Richard Tyrrel, 1716-60.

(Facing p. 91)



## THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL LECTURE

BY kind permission of the Director of the National Maritime Museum the Annual Lecture for 1954 was given on September 23rd. by Lieutenant-Commander George Naish, R.N.V.R., in the Museum's theatre. Among those present were:

Mr Francis Adams, Dr and Mrs R. C. Anderson, Mr C. Archibald, Mr John Bailey, Lieut.-Commander J. Benians, Lieut.-Commander P. Bolt, Lieutenant and Mrs L. J. W. Brisley, Professor J. G. Bullocke, Mr Frank Carr, Mr F. C. Chapman, Mrs R. S. Cockburn, Miss M. Coppack, Mr R. H. Dolley, Captain T. Emanuel, Inst.-Lieut. L. Farrington, Captain A. L. Fletcher, Commander and Mrs W. Galpin, Captain A. Grant, Mr D. C. Harber, Miss Hicks, Commander H. O. Hill, Lieut.-Colonel A. J. Hughes, Engineer-Admiral R. C. Hugill, Dr and Mrs John Ives, Inst.-Captain T. E. Jackson, Brigadier H. A. Joly de Lotbinière, Mr and Mrs E. C. Jones, Mr Basil Lavis, Mr John Lewis, Professor M. Lewis, Miss K. Lindsay-MacDougall, Mr C. Lloyd, Mr R. Lowen, Mr L. Lother, Mr F. Maggs, Mr J. Maggs, Commander E. W. May, Commander and Mrs Hilary Mead, Mr and Mrs C. Miller, Mr D. Moore, Sir Alan Moore, Mr J. Munday, Mr and Mrs F. C. P. Naish, Mrs G. P. B. Naish, Lieut.-Commander and Mrs R. H. Palmer, Captain C. Parkes, Mr F. Pateman, Lady Phillips, Mr E. A. Philp, Mrs C. Raffell, Mr Gregory Robinson, Mr R. A. Skelton, Mr A. Smith, Mrs M. Steuart, Mr W. Tower, Mr A. L. Tucker, Lieut.-Commander and Mrs Waite, Miss H. Wallace, Mrs J. Wilson, Mr G. R. G. Worcester.

Dr R. C. Anderson was in the Chair, introduced the Lecturer, and afterwards proposed a vote of thanks to him, which was carried with acclamation. Tea was later provided in the restaurant.

## NAVAL UNIFORM

*By Lieutenant-Commander George Naish, R.N.V.R.*

The occasion for the choosing of this subject for the Society's annual lecture is the recent addition to the museum of a display case for naval uniforms at the back of the stage in Neptune's Hall. Here we have recently placed on exhibition some thirty dressed figures, ranging in date from 1780 to the present day, and including the uniforms connected with such famous names in naval history as Hood, Nelson, Napier, Jellicoe and Cunningham. Yet it is rather the development of the uniform that we have attempted to trace, and we hope that by publicizing our new exhibition we shall get more uniforms and portions of uniform given us. For example, at present we can show nothing of an earlier date than about 1780, and many of you will have noticed in the press reference to the luck of the Scottish United Services Museum in finding an admiral's frock and waistcoat of 1767.

I propose this afternoon to deal more particularly with the uniforms in our own collection, and to relate them to contemporary documents, and even so I shall have to quicken my pace as I get to modern times. To contrive a true picture it is necessary to relate naval uniform to civilian dress and to army uniform. We of the museum staff who have been arranging the uniform display, and there is still lots more to be done, have been very conscious whilst dressing the figures how very easily an error can creep in; so please tell us when you spot something wrong and above all see if you can find us material with which to fill in the gaps. We particularly want to show the dress of the warrant and petty officers and seamen. Before proceeding I should like to acknowledge the assistance received from the work of members of the Society who have published articles on the dress of sailors in the *Mariner's Mirror*. I am thinking of Commander C. N. Robinson, Mr G. W. Manwaring and Mr D. Bonner-Smith; they have told us about 'slops' and the introduction of the officer's uniform in 1748. Our Society's Chairman, Professor Michael Lewis, has written up in a masterly fashion the collection of naval buttons the museum received from Captain Rowand. Captain Bosanquet, who we are all so sorry cannot be with us this afternoon, has catalogued the museum's collection of naval officers' swords, and this catalogue is soon to be published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Amongst those few uniforms which we are showing, just to whet your appetites, in this lecture theatre, I hope you will notice Captain Bosanquet's full dress coat, with the white patches on the collar, which he wore between 1885 and 1890 and has now presented to the museum. We have a few interesting documents and actual uniforms on view in this room, and I shall illustrate my talk with slides, but you must remember the real illustrations to my lecture are to be seen in the museum galleries, the uniform display case in Neptune's Hall and the many portraits of naval officers. Mr Michael Robinson has labelled these portraits and is careful to note what uniform the subject is wearing. In addition, Mr Robinson, Commander May and Mr Munday have collaborated in producing a booklet, on sale at the catalogue stall, about naval uniforms. You will see therefore that I have had many people to assist me. What is new is the attempt to relate a large number of actual articles of uniform to the regulations which inspired them. And in this connexion I must thank Miss Lindsay-MacDougall who has searched out for me original documents in her charge, some of which we are showing here to-day, the first time most of them can ever have been on exhibition. And also Mr Waite and Miss Coppack who have dressed the figures in the light of the regulations, and sometimes we have found it rather a dim light, and also done such cleaning and mending and protecting from moth as seemed practicable and desirable.



The general use of a military uniform, tailored in accordance with regulations drawn up by the king or state, is not of great antiquity, although its origins go back a very long time. I believe it is not misleading to suggest that the introduction of army uniform, in the modern sense of the word, owes much to King George II. He and his brother, the Duke of Cumberland, attempted to standardize the dress of the rank and file, but much latitude continued to be shown in the dress of the officers. The standardized uniform was for parade and was based on civilian fashions in dress and, although meant to be worn in battle, had few attributes of the present-day utilitarian battle dress. In fact, uniform frightened the enemy by its careless splendour, as did the gilded figurehead of the first-rate line-of-battle ship. We shall see that the Hanoverians, monarchs and dukes, were all very interested in the devising of military uniforms. When in 1748 the king authorized a naval uniform, he treated the Royal Navy as if it were another regiment, only in this case he standardized the dress of the officers. The sailors continued to be sold 'slops', that is, made-up clothing, and material for the making of their clothes, often accompanied by sealed patterns. But although sailors could be recognized as such by their costume, this was not finally standardized in the Royal Navy until 1857.

We know what induced King George II to authorize a uniform to distinguish his sea officers, and the important manuscript sources of our information can be seen on the desk in front of me. In 1739 certain naval officers had formed an amicable club, to meet weekly at Wills Coffee House and dine annually on St George's Day. The aims of the club were to oppose all illegal innovations, secure justice in all grievances and maintain their liberties as subjects though they be officers in the Navy. On 15 February 1746, the club, recently renamed the Amicable Marine Society, met at the Bedford Head Tavern and a motion was passed 'that a uniform or marine dress might hereafter be worn by the sea commission officers, meaning Captains and Lieutenants'. On Sunday 23 February 1745-6, the club met with Captain G. Barkeley as president, and decided:

That three or more of the members wait on the Duke of Bedford and Admiralty Board with an address drawn up by a committee appointed for that purpose acquainting them, that it is the opinion of thirty captains who are in Town and is believed the general sense of the service, that an uniform dress is useful and necessary for the commissioned officers, agreeable to the practice of other nations; that they desire their Lordships opinion and if they approve of it, that they will be pleased to introduce it to his Majesty.

Captains Frankland, Spragge and Montague were appointed by ballot to draw up and present the address. There is no more about naval uniform in the club's minute book. The story is continued in a letter from the Admiralty to the Navy Board, which you will see we have placed by the side

of the club's minute book. This letter is dated 14 April 1748 and is minuted as having been read to the Board the same day. The letter reads:

My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty having judged it necessary, in order the better to distinguish the rank of sea officers to establish a military uniform cloathing for Admirals, Captains, Commanders and Lieutenants, and judging it also necessary that persons acting as Midshipmen should likewise have a uniform cloathing in order to their carrying the appearance which is necessary to distinguish their class to be in the rank of gentlemen and their Lordships having caused patterns of a dress sute and frock to be made for each class of officers, Vizt. Captains who have taken post three years and by His Majesty's late regulation rank as colonels; all other post Captains who by the said regulation rank as Lieutenant Colonels; Commanders not taking post; and Lieutenants; and likewise one sute for Midshipmen; which patterns they have directed to be lodged in your office for the information of those several degrees of officers, I am commanded by their Lordships to acquaint you therewith, and to signify their direction to you, to permit any of the aforesaid officers to view the same from time to time, as they may have occasion; but must observe to you that there is no particular pattern for the Commander's dress sute, as it varies only in the manner of lacing from the Captain, who ranks as a Lieut. Colonel, therefore a description accompanies the pattern, which you are to communicate to those concerned.

Certain of the patterns of this new uniform have survived and can be seen at the Royal United Services Institution at Whitehall. They can also be studied in the many fine portraits of naval officers by Reynolds and other artists. The admiral's 'dress sute' is very splendid indeed. The long coat is collarless and the short, broad sleeves have deep cuffs. Fine lace is displayed at the neck and wrists. There is a great deal of gold lace on the coat, with most elaborate frogs opposite the gold buttons, and the coat is worn open to show off the slightly less elaborately laced waistcoat. The fashion is similar to the civilian men's clothing of the age. Portraits of Byng and Rowley in Gallery Five show the admiral's 'dress sute'. Reynold's portrait of Francis Holburne and his son in the same gallery show the admiral's 'frock' and the midshipman's 'sute'. We must most of us have heard the story of how this uniform of blue, white and gold came to be chosen. It is told by Edward Hawke Locker, a Commissioner of Greenwich Hospital and the son of Captain William Locker, Lieutenant-Governor of the Hospital and who had been the Captain of the *Lowestoffe*, the frigate in which Nelson went to sea after he had been commissioned a lieutenant. Locker wrote to Sir Henry Ellis of the British Museum in 1830:

But of this transaction my boyish memory has preserved an anecdote, which some thirty-five years ago, I heard from the lips of Mr Forbes, then Admiral of the fleet, whom I was allowed occasionally to visit with my father, who delighted to listen to the stories of his venerable friend, and who, though confined by age and infirmities to his chair, still recounted them with uncommon accuracy.

Apparently Forbes suggested a uniform of red and blue to the First Lord, the Duke of Bedford.

No, replied his Grace, the King has determined otherwise, for having seen my Duchess riding in the park a few days ago in a habit of blue faced with white, the dress took the fancy of his Majesty, who has appointed it for the uniform of the Royal Navy.





Flag-officer's frock, 1748–67. Portrait of Sir Charles Saunders, painted by Reynolds, 1765.

(Facing p. 94)



Flag-officer's frock, 1767-83.  
Portrait of Richard Edwards, d. 1794, painted by N. Dance, 1780.



Thus legends are formed and it has been pointed out that the story when told by Locker was some eighty years old, and depended on the memories of two old men.

In the same year, 1748, the scholars of the Royal Academy at Portsmouth were ordered to wear the same uniform as the midshipmen. Before this every scholar had provided himself with a new suit of blue cloth against His Majesty's birthday. The gold trimmings upon this suit were now disallowed.

There is evidence that the proper uniform was adopted slowly. On one station the order reached the commander-in-chief but not the patterns and so nothing could be done. And there was slackness observed nearer home. The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty visited Portsmouth Dockyard in August 1749 and noted that when they visited the *Invincible*, *Fougeux*, *Anson* and *Kent* everything was in order 'except the gentlemen on the quarter deck not being dressed in the uniform, many of whom had blue trimmed with white, but almost every one made in a different manner'. And in November 1749 they wrote to the three commanders-in-chief at the home ports: 'And as example is on these occasions extremely necessary, you are to cause every captain under your command to appear in the said dress, and we do expect that you yourself shall constantly appear in the same.'

In 1767 there were new regulations and the letter from the Admiralty to the Navy Board dated 18 July 1767 is being shown to you this afternoon. The full dress uniform clothing is to be discontinued. I have seen it stated that this was because of its great expense, but it had been in use for close on twenty years and so I think its abolition more likely to be due to the changing fashion in dress amongst gentlemen ashore. The frocks, a little altered, were now to be the only uniform and we now get a written description of the frocks. The letter continues:

The Admiral's Frock to have narrow lappels down to the Waist; small boot cuffs; a single lace instead of treble lace down the side skirts; to be laced with a plain mousquetaire lace agreeable to the pattern lodged at your office, and in all other respects to be the same as are now worn.

The Captains and Commanders Frocks to have narrow lappels down to the waist, and in all other respects to continue as they are now worn.

The Lieutenants Frocks to have narrow lappels down to the waist; slash cuffs like the Commanders (without lace) instead of roll cuffs, and in all other respects to remain as they are now worn.

In January 1768 'the military uniform frocks' of the lieutenants were given white lapels and cuffs. The waistcoats were to be 'plain white cloth with gilt buttons of the pattern now worn without any lace'.

In 1774 the uniform of the Captains and commanders was changed. The original letter from the Admiralty to the Navy Board can be seen by you afterwards on this table. The Frock of 1748, altered in 1768, is to be

altered again and considered as the full dress, and there is to be a new blue Frock 'conformable to the pattern to be lodged in your office' and to be 'allowed to be worn upon common occasions'. The letter shown is dated 30 July 1774, and the changes are described thus:

Alterations in the present uniform cloathing of the Captains and Commanders of His Majesty's Fleet Vizt. The lace on the coat to return round the pockets and sleeves; the lappels and cuffs to be two inches and an half broad, the lace upon the upper part of the lappels to run even with the bottom lace of the collar; the buttons to be flat with an anchor and cable engraved thereon, according to the pattern lodged at the Navy Office.

The waistcoat to be plain instead of laced; the breeches to be of the same colour as the waistcoat, instead of blue, and both to have buttons of the same pattern as the coat.

Undress.

Blue frock, lappels, cuffs and collar the same, the collar to button to the lappels, lap over behind; white shalloon lining, buttons the same as the dress coat; gold embroidered button holes as undermentioned vizt. For Captains who have taken post three years or upwards 12 holes in the lappels by threes, 3 in the flaps, and 3 in the sleeves.

For post Captains of less than three years standing 12 holes in the lappels by twos, 4 holes in the flaps and 4 in the sleeves by twos.

For Commanders 12 holes in the lappels regular, 3 holes in the flaps, and 3 in the sleeves.

Waistcoats and breeches the same as for the dressed uniform.

The admiral's uniform was not altered until 1783. At the same time commodores and first captains were to be distinguished, in certain circumstances, by wearing the same frock uniform as rear-admirals. The Admiralty wrote to the Navy Board, enclosing patterns for the embroidery for the full dress and also the frocks on 11 January 1783. The uniforms are described as follows:

Full Dress.

*Admirals.* A blue cloth coat with white cuffs; white waistcoat and breeches; the coat and waistcoat to be embroidered with gold, in pattern and description the same as worn by the Generals of His Majesty's Army. Three rows of embroidery on the cuff.

*Vice Admirals.* The same, with embroidery the same as that worn by Lieutenant-Generals: two rows of embroidery on the cuff.

*Rear Admirals.* The same, with embroidery the same as that worn by Major-Generals: one row of embroidery on the cuff.

Undress.

*Admirals.* A blue cloth frock with blue cuff and blue lappels; embroidered button holes like those now in use, from the top to the bottom of the lappel, at equal distance, three on the cuff.

*Vice Admirals.* The same, with button holes three and three.

*Rear Admirals.* The same, with button holes two and two.

Plain white waistcoat and breeches.

Buttons the same pattern as are now in use.

We can see the pattern the uniform changes followed. The full dress abolished, as being old fashioned and too ornate; the undress modified and made the only dress or full dress until it was in its turn abolished. The link in 1783 between the admiral's uniforms and the uniform of the generals is interesting because the earliest uniform in the exhibition is a major-general's





Midshipman's uniform. Portrait of James Ward, painted 1775.



The quarter-deck of the *Queen Charlotte* at the First of June 1794, painted by Mather Brown. L.-R. Sir Roger Curtis, and Earl Howe; Major Isaac, Captain Brown and Captain Neville, all of the Queen's 2nd Regiment; Captain Lock, Captain Sir Andrew Snape Douglas and Sir Andrew Snape Douglas's son, who was killed at the battle of the Clouds.



undress frock of 1783. This belonged to Major-General Arthur Tooker Collins of the Marines who became a major-general in 1782 and commanded the Marine Division at Plymouth in 1789. This is the same uniform worn by general officers in the army, for the Marines did not have a special uniform for this rank. The admiral's uniform was changed in October 1787 but the policy of copying army uniform was not reversed for long. In November 1787 the uniforms of all officers were changed and uniform given in addition to warrant-officers and masters' mates. We have a captain's full dress coat with white lapels and cuffs, laced with gold lace, the round cuff with two laces, which denotes a post-captain of three years. The blue stand-up collar was double laced. The new buttons have an anchor in an oval. The waistcoat and breeches are of white cloth and plain. This is the coat of Captain Alexander Hood, killed in action when he commanded the *Mars* in 1798. It is in beautiful condition.

On 1 June 1795 the uniform of flag-officers, captains and commanders was altered. The white facings were changed to blue, a gold laced hat is mentioned for full dress. The important innovation was epaulettes, which was a return to the adoption of army uniform. Flag-officers' rank was to be distinguished by three silver stars on each epaulette, and three rows of lace on the sleeve, vice-admirals wearing two of each and rear-admirals one of each. This distinction applied to both full dress and undress. Captains wore two plain gold epaulettes in full dress which were 'to take off and put on occasionally' in undress. In full dress their sleeves were slashed as they had sometimes been in the past. Captains under three years were to wear one epaulette on the right shoulder; commanders a plain gold epaulette on the left shoulder. The museum collection is rich in uniforms of the period; we can show you five of Nelson's uniforms. There is the rear-admiral's undress coat he wore at the Battle of the Nile. He gave this to Mrs Damer after she had modelled a gigantic bust of him which went to the Guildhall. Later she did another large bust which she gave with the coat to the Duke of Clarence. He kept them at Bushey Park until he came to the throne when he gave the Nile coat to Greenwich Hospital. Then we have three undress vice-admiral's coats and a full dress. All of these have the replicas of the four orders of chivalry Nelson habitually wore sewn on the left chest. The empty right sleeves have little loops of black tape which can be hitched to a button, rather high on his chest. Another full dress coat is in Westminster Abbey. The most famous of Nelson's coats is, of course, the one he was wearing when he was killed. The bullet hole is in the left shoulder. The marksman was above him in the mizzen top of the *Redoubtable*, not more than 40 ft. away. We are told Nelson was conspicuous from his bright orders, but the upper deck of the *Victory* was fast being cleared by

enemy random musket fire, although the smoke made marksmanship difficult. The Trafalgar coat disappeared. Lady Hamilton had sold or pawned it to Alderman Smith, her friendly creditor who took Merton off her hands. He died, and it was a number of years before his widow in 1844 produced the coat and other articles out of a box. A dealer named Evans and Sir Harris Nicholas, Nelson's biographer, fought over this find, almost with their fists, and ultimately the Prince Consort purchased the coat and the waistcoat and presented them to Greenwich Hospital. We also have his breeches and stockings. Nelson's other personal belongings were shared out amongst his family and we are lucky to be able to show the coat and epaulettes which fell to his sister Catherine Matcham's share.

We have two captain's full dress coats, one of them belonging to the afore-mentioned Captain Alexander Hood of the *Mars*. Also a commander's full dress coat with a plain gold epaulette on the left shoulder. Also a captain's undress coat with a fall down collar, a very plain coat, with buttons on the sleeves and pockets.

The introduction of the epaulette into naval uniform deserves comment. It seems clear that it was useful to denote rank, especially in undress uniform, now very plain. For this purpose of denoting rank the French had used epaulettes since 1759 (according to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1950 edition). The French admiral, Comte de Grasse, is shown wearing epaulettes in 1782. Epaulettes were introduced into the British army in 1764 (and given up in 1855). In 1783 Nelson was in France and wrote to his father of two noble captains, Bell and Shephard, who wore fine epaulettes, for which Nelson thought them great coxcombs, adding: 'You may suppose I hold them a little cheap for putting on any part of a Frenchman's uniform.'

In 1847, J. R. Planché, the great authority on the history of dress, quotes a Mr Popham Lethbridge as writing:

During the peace some of our officers visited France, but the sentries did not carry arms to them as they had no epaulettes, whilst that compliment was paid to officers of marines, who then wore silver ones. In consequence of this circumstance, it is said Lord Hugh Seymour and another officer added gold epaulettes to their uniforms; and when his Lordship became a Lord of the Admiralty, under Earl Spencer, they were accorded to all captains and commanders.

John Arscott Lethbridge, Esq., R.N., was for many years secretary of the Royal Hospital, Greenwich. He entered the Royal Navy in the *Diadem* under Sir Hume Popham, and remained with him for many years, and was later secretary to the committee of Flag Officers who considered Popham's signal code. Mr Popham Lethbridge was probably his son, for I find he had a son.

Lord Hugh Seymour, formerly Captain Hugh Conway, had a brother



who died in France in August 1784, and he was also a great friend of the Prince of Wales. In 1795 he became a Lord of the Admiralty, and his influence with Lord Spencer was such that Middleton (Lord Barham) resigned in protest against decisions made without consultation, in consequence of pledges made by Lord Hugh Seymour to his naval friends.

It has been suggested that epaulettes were at first unpopular amongst naval officers, but there seems to be no evidence for this, apart from Nelson's letter which referred to English officers in France wearing an unauthorized addition to their military costume. I do not suppose English officers wore epaulettes on their own quarter decks before 1795. On the other hand, gentlemen travelling on the Continent seem to have preferred to wear a military dress, either a proper uniform, or something which looked like one. We know naval captains wore epaulettes in France in 1783 and their official introduction in 1795 was probably popular. Indeed in 1800 an officer writes to the *Naval Chronicle* complaining that a lieutenant of the Engineers from Woolwich, and a post-captain under three years, ranking with a lieutenant-colonel of the army and in command of a frigate, both wore blue uniform coats which could be confused and one epaulette on the right shoulder. He advises their Lordships to give epaulettes to lieutenants.

In fact there is evidence that naval officers wished to secure a position both in society and in general military esteem the same as that enjoyed by army officers. The naval surgeons are a case in point.

In 1805 surgeons were given officers' status with a new uniform. In 1787 they were ranked with the warrant-officers as regards uniform. The Admiralty wished to attract more surgeons into the Navy. The physicians and surgeons asked to be given relative rank with army doctors. They asked for a smart uniform. In the result, in June 1805 a uniform was allowed, the full dress like a captain's undress but with a stand-up collar. The physician had gold lace round his sleeves in full dress but the surgeon none. We are lucky to be able to show you the uniform of Joshua Horwood, who was in the *Prince* at Trafalgar. This uniform is similar to that which Sir William Beatty is shown wearing in the contemporary picture by Arthur Devis of Nelson's death in the cockpit of the *Victory*.

In 1807, masters and pursers were similarly allowed to wear an officer's uniform, whereas before they had been classed with the rest of the warrant-officers. The masters had based their claim on the preference already shown to surgeons, and made an earnest request 'of having a suitable *Rank* and a uniform dress established according to the service and great responsibility attaching to their appointment', signing themselves 'The Masters of the Port of Chatham'. One of their grievances was that having no proper

uniform or status, the master was not treated as an officer when made a prisoner of war. The uniform granted was very similar to that worn by surgeons.

On 28 March 1809 the Admiralty was writing to the Navy Board, anxious 'to enforce due attention in Master's Mates and Midshipmen, to appear in their established uniform' and ordering patterns to be lodged in a number of establishments. Hats caused difficulties. The draft reply mentions

We herewith send 3 hats for their Lordships inspection with the price, and request their Lordships will decide which of them shall be sent as a pattern to the different yards. Add this to Admiralty letter.

Ready money prices of the Pattern Hats from a wholesale dealer in Town.

Hat with button, loop and cockade duty included

£2-5

Hat with button, loop, cockade and rosettes, duty included

£3

Hat with buttons, loop, cockade, rosettes, bound with gold lace, duty included

£4-15.

Midshipmen still sometimes wore gold laced hats.

In 1810 there was a special uniform for: 'Those post captains of H.M. Navy, who being Commissioners of the Navy, Victualling or Transport Services, may have been passed over at any Flag promotion, by officers junior to themselves being promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral.' These officers were to be allowed to wear a rear-admiral's undress uniform with deviations such as wearing plain epaulettes and special buttons. A commissioner of this class, Robert Fanshaw, complained of the 'humiliating degradation' of 'being required to wear an expensive dress significant of inferiority of rank to other commissioners of the navy' who were post-captains but still in the line for promotion to admiral's rank. He was told his wearing of rear-admiral's uniform with deviations was an honour of which His Majesty had been highly pleased to approve.

The comprehensive uniform regulations of 1812 altered the button, a crown being placed over the anchor, and restored the white facings to the uniforms which lost them in 1795. Captain's epaulettes were given the device of anchors and crowns, while commanders were to wear two plain epaulettes. Lieutenants were to wear a full dress similar to captain's and commander's but without lace and a plain epaulette on the right shoulder. A poet in the *Naval Chronicle* for 1812 welcomes the lieutenant's epaulette, addressing,

Ye gallant subjects of Old Davy  
The jolly 'Luffs' of Britain's Navy

and adding without encouragement

Right gladly would I turn my lay  
To sing of some increase of pay



And we are told by an officer: 'In the first two or three days some lieutenants began to mount the swabs. The signal man would report a post-captain coming and the guard turn out to receive him, when it proved to be *only* a lieutenant.'

We have the full dress of a rear-admiral and a captain of 1812. The admiral's hat is worn athwartships. It belonged to Rear-Admiral John Spratt Rainier (1777-1822) who was promoted in 1819.

Of about this date, 1812, is the full uniform coat of a commander, Regular Ship, of the Honourable East India Company. It is a blue coat with black velvet lapels and round cuffs. Ten buttons on each lapel are arranged in pairs and the button holes are gold embroidered. The Company's crest is on the gilt buttons; the same crest appears to-day on Cunard-White Star buttons. This coat belonged to Captain Hugh Scott of the Honourable Company's service.

As we have now come to the uniform regulations which saw the end of the Napoleonic Wars, it is an opportunity to look around. The regulations of 1812 seem to have been generally approved as smartening up the naval uniform. These regulations were issued in the name of the Prince Regent. According to Lieutenant-General Robert Long, a cavalry officer, the army in the Peninsula did not approve of new regulations issued to them by the Prince about the same time. 'I do not like', writes Long in a letter home, 'that *Prussian* propensity which the Prince has displayed in his recent regulations about dress.' And again: 'To see the British Army denationalized as it were in appearance to pay a compliment to French taste, is what my English blood cannot brook.'

In the navy the officer's uniform was I think being worn more smartly. Looking round the earlier portraits in the museum galleries you see the lapels undone and buttoned up or over in a variety of ways according to the fancy of the wearer. They are now generally buttoned back and the two parts held together across the chest by hooks and eyes. Already the cut of the coat sometimes gives a pigeon-chested appearance.

Prince William first met Nelson in 1782 when Nelson was 24 years old. He later described his appearance: 'He had on a full-laced uniform, his lank unpowdered hair was tied in a stiff Hessian tail of an extraordinary length; the old-fashioned flaps of his waistcoat added to his general quaintness of his figure.' The little queue he was wearing at Trafalgar was cut off and given to Lady Hamilton and is in the Museum amongst Nelson's personal relics. Here is a description of Nelson at Trafalgar by Lieutenant Rivers of Greenwich Hospital who served on board the *Victory*:

The dress worn on that day was the same as he usually wore, a plain cocked hat with a green shade fixed to it inclining over the right eye, hat worn nearly square, white neckerchief, white marsalla

waistcoat, uniform coat with four stars, white casimer breeches, and stockings thread and silk mixed, shoes with buckles, he had no sword on, a glass about 2 feet long in his hand... His Lordship never altered his dress the 3 years in the *Victory*: upon two occasions he put on boots for a few hours in wet weather.

Here is a picture of Collingwood from his obituary notice in the *Naval Chronicle*:

It was his general rule in tempestuous weather, and upon any hostile emergency that occurred, to sleep upon his sofa in a flannel gown, taking off only his epauletted coat. The writer of this just delineation has seen him upon deck without his hat, and his grey hair floating to the wind, whilst torrents of rain poured down through the clouds...

And a little beyond our present period we get a picture of the captain of the *Genoa* at Navarino in 1827 by a seaman of the ship:

I saw Captain Bathurst coming down the poop ladder, when the tail of his cocked hat was carried away by a splinter from the bulwarks of the ship... There was something at once noble and ludicrous in the appearance and situation of the old man as he proudly walked the quarterdeck, with his drawn sword and shattered hat, amid showers of shot and splinters, insensible apparently to the danger that surrounded him...

And here is a portrait of Admiral Sir Edward Codrington by his daughter which removes us from the battle to the toilet, the elaborate toilet of an officer and gentleman of the old school:

In the portrait, painted in 1805... my father is shown to be wearing powder, and he continued to do so for many years after—in fact, as long as the habit of gentlemen made it imperative; and though he left off the *queue* as soon as it was admissible to do so, I can still remember him as wearing powder, in my early childhood (about 1815)... There was the careful and deliberative shaving, and then the elaborate powdering: there was the white ‘powdering-cloth’, spread out upon the carpet, the ‘powder-puff’, which seemed to me to do fairy’s work, the matter-of-fact ‘powder-knife’, that cleared off the fairy’s work from the forehead and temples—and finally the critical operation of putting on the neckcloth. That article consisted of a square yard of whitest jacconet very carefully folded. It began behind, crossed in front, crossed again behind, and finally met in front, the voluminous folds being confined by the neat little bow into which the ends were tied under the chin, and which surmounted the very full and broad shirt frill of the finest cambric.

Captain John Harvey Boteler, speaking of about 1813, says:

We were considered a crack ship, and the midshipmen dressed in cocked hats, tight white pantaloons and Hessian boots, with gilt twist edging and a bullion tassel.

There are a number of pictures showing officers wearing Hessian boots with gold tassels. It is worth noting that officers’ recollections of the uniforms they wore when they first went to sea can be very misleading and are seldom worth quoting as evidence unless supported by regulations and other reliable sources. Pictorial evidence can sometimes be no better and even Rowlandson’s delightful series of naval characters, published in 1799, show epaulettes and the white facings for senior officers, which is an improbable combination, for white facings were changed to blue when the epaulettes were introduced in 1795.



Nelson at Trafalgar was probably one of the smarter figures amongst the officers and men of the opposing fleets, and certainly on board the *Victory*. He wore undress but was distinguishable by reason of the stars of the four orders he habitually wore. At Waterloo, Wellington was probably about the drabbest figure and the smartest maybe a drummer boy. Mercer, an artillery officer, hotly engaged with his battery in the midst of the battle of Waterloo took the figure of a man rambling amongst his guns, 'dressed in a shabby old drab greatcoat and a rusty round hat' for some amateur from Brussels and resented his questioning until he turned out to be Sir Thomas Picton. Wellington, Guedalla tells us, had an unbounded faith in a strong glass and a fast horse and often rode beyond his outposts to see things for himself. He generally wore 'a grey frock coat worn with a low cocked hat in an oilskin cover'.

We have hardly mentioned seamen because they had no strict uniform before 1857, and anyhow we have few examples of their actual dress in our collection to date. Exceptions are some examples of the round cap with a turned back brim with a device on it supplied by admirals to their barge's crew. One example has the Hood family crest in front. The same Captain Boteler gives us a word picture of how the ship's company of the *Antelope*, 50 guns, dressed themselves when that ship commissioned in 1815. The first fine day the men were mustered,

they were issued with twelve yards of duck, thread and needles and a black silk handkerchief. A brass nail was driven in the deck at three or six yards as a guide for measuring and before the retreat was drummed 'Hear the news, fore and aft, by next muster day everyone will be expected to appear in a frock and trowsers'. You would see fellows run to the galley fire, burn a stick, down on the deck, dot off the shape, and commence the work at once. Others, unable to do this, would give their grog to those more expert: and the consequence was, at the end only of a week, there were not above fifty or so many defaulters. The same thing with straw hats. Every bum boat was expected to bring off a bundle of peculiar grass... and soon you would see the men at work at their sinnet and in a very short time with first-rate hats.

Army uniform for the rank and file of the 3rd Foot Guards does not compare favourably with the, let us hope, comfortable frocks and trousers of the jolly jack-tars. There follows an extract from a letter of 1810 to H.R.H. Duke of Gloucester, Colonel of the 3rd Foot Guards, from the Adjutant-General. Sergeant J. Harris has copied it into the Orderly Book.

Sir, The Commander-in-Chief has with much concern observed in various instances in the clothing and equipment, both of the cavalry and infantry, such deviations from his Majesty's regulations on these heads as require his immediate interference...

The first point to which it is the Commander in Chief's wish to call your attention is the make of the coat which is in some regiments so cut away as literally to afford no covering or protection to those parts of the body where warmth is most essential, viz., the lower parts of the belly and the hip joints. They are moreover made so tight that they are with difficulty buttoned over the waist-coats and they diminish the power of action in a mode highly prejudicial to the health and vigours

of the soldier, drawing the body together and checking that free and allacrity of motion in the body and arms that are so conducive to the growth and expansion of the young and to the comfort and health of all. The shortness of the coat necessarily occasions a corresponding diminution of the length of the waistcoat which by that means is reduced so much in its dimensions as to afford little warmth in winter and to be totally useless for one essential purpose for which it was intended, viz., as a fatigue dress in barracks during the summer. To remedy those evils the breeches are made of a preposterous length and the waistband is brought so high upon the body as to be extremely inconvenient and detracting from the military appearance of the men.

We stop here, but not Sergeant Harris and the Adjutant-General; it makes one wonder if the press gang was not a kinder fate than the recruiting sergeant.

We have now reached a very interesting period, between 1825 and 1843, in which time the naval officer's uniform may be said to have been transformed from the Nelson pattern to something very like the uniform we have become used to seeing about us to-day. From 1825 onwards the regulations will be found printed in the official Navy List under their proper dates of being promulgated. On 1 January 1825 the existing regulations were revised and expanded so as to distinguish the various branches by buttons and devices on the collars. The three anchors of the Navy Office distinguished the masters, the two crossed anchors of the Victualling Office the pursers, a foul anchor, fouled by a snake instead of a cable, the physicians. The gunner, boatswain and carpenter had the plain foul anchor. These 1825 regulations are easier to study than most because they were elucidated by official published illustrations. King George IV was now on the throne and, we are told by Greville the diarist, was in the habit of spending much time with his tailors altering the uniform of his guards, assisted by H.R.H. the Duke of Cumberland, and this became his principal occupation and he would not see his ministers. The Duke of Clarence advised on naval uniforms.

In 1827 the Duke of Clarence was made the Lord High Admiral and new regulations dated 18 December that year gave only one dress but of a quite different appearance. The double lapels of Nelson's day and of Hawke's day gave place to what we should now term a double-breasted coat for executive officers and a single-breasted coat for warrant-officers and civilian officers. The stand-up collars were white and laced. The next year, on 12 May, an undress uniform was added. On 10 July 1830 the white facings of collars and cuffs were changed to red (although the midshipman retained his white turnback or patch).

After 1825 trousers begin to take the place of breeches in naval uniform. From the beginning of the eighteenth century sailors had worn baggy trousers which were called slops. And Prince William Henry, who joined the *St George* as a midshipman in 1779, is depicted wearing white trousers,



rather baggy and reaching down over his shoes. In the 1825 regulations officers in full dress wore breeches or pantaloons and gunners, boatswains and carpenters, trousers or pantaloons; in undress all officers wore breeches, pantaloons or trousers, blue or white. In the 1827 regulations all officers wore blue trousers with lace down the seams the same width as that of their coats. In undress they could wear blue trousers without lace, and in hot climates or on home service in summer, all ranks were permitted to wear white Russia duck trousers.

The officers of the Fleet will observe that there is no longer any difference of full or undress, except in this particular of gold lace on the trowsers of Commissioned Officers as already stated; and that at the King's or Queen's Drawing-Rooms, Officers are to wear white cloth or kerseymere breeches, with buttons of the waistcoat pattern, with white sword belt and white silk stockings, with gold or gilt knee and shoe buckles; on all other occasions whatsoever they are to wear blue trowsers and short boots, as already stated.

Doubts concerning the wearing of trousers were set at rest by an order of 28 September 1831. By this order, on all occasions of full dress, white trousers over boots were to be worn between 1 May and 14 October and blue trousers the rest of the year. Only flag officers were to wear gold lace down the seams.

The 1827 regulations also defined a 'short blue single-breasted great coat, with stand-up collar', rank to be shown by rows of gold twist on each cuff, which could be worn on leave in the neighbourhood of their ships; and there was 'a round jacket without skirts' which could be worn at sea. It is to be hoped that examples of these, as well as of the early caps and round black hats, will be acquired for the museum collection.

On 17 May 1832 new regulations were produced and quickly superseded the next year on 20 January 1833 by regulations describing a smarter uniform, with more gold lace to full dress, which was to last for ten years. Engineers were given uniforms on 23 November 1837 and 21 December 1841. White facings were restored on 30 June 1843.

We show the fully dressed figure of a commander, 1825-7. The neckwear of flowing lace and cravat and the bunch of seals dropping out from under the coat are common features of contemporary portraits of officers in uniform. To us he appears a dandy. By his side we show a coat, and 'dickey' waistcoat, of a lieutenant.

A midshipman's coat of 1827-30 is our only specimen of this revolutionary set of regulations. The convex buttons were a new feature. They were easily made at first by punching the old flat buttons into a hole made to receive them. Note that the midshipman's coat is single breasted because the midshipman is not a commissioned officer.

A commander's coat of 1832-33 is interesting because we can compare it

with a captain's of the following year. We show a captain of 1833-43 in full dress; also a secretary to the commander-in-chief of the same period. The secretary's coat is single breasted, the buttons in pairs. Unfortunately we cannot show you undress uniforms of this period.

The Duke of Clarence was well known in the navy as a martinet. Byam Martin has told of his experiences in the *Andromeda* under William's command in 1788. Uniformity with regard to uniform was the Prince's watchword, the old and the young, the tall and the short. Byam Martin went aloft to dress ship in white breeches so tight as to appear to be sewn upon the limb, yellow-topped hunting boots pulled close up and strapped with a buckle round the knee, a dangling pigtail of huge dimensions, an immense square cocked hat and a sword. In 1814 we know from private letters that William was trying to get gold-topped boots introduced as uniform but the Board of Admiralty held out against him. The 1827 changes were thought by many officers ridiculous and an unnecessary break with the tradition of the great wars. Especially they regretted the plain and unassuming undress uniform of those gallant days. Yet we see the new holding its own, and in 1828 a frock added to the officer's wardrobe, which could be worn with a regulation cap.

Captain Boteler once again has an amusing comment, even if in the manner of memoir writers he gets his dates of unessentials a little wrong:

It was always said and understood among the mids. that if the Duke got into power, he would put us all in red cuffs and collars and red breeches; and how nearly true it turned out, for when he became Lord High Admiral in 1826-7, he changed the uniform to red cuffs and collars, but did not disturb the breeches.

Actually he did not disturb the midshipman's patch. And he evidently favoured the general introduction of pantaloons and trousers which were soon to supplant breeches.

It is time to run quickly through the remaining figures, to give you some idea what uniforms we have and what we particularly lack. I can say at once that we have no uniform of engineer officers of any period, but the medical and supply branches have representatives. We have more uniforms of high- than of low-ranking officers and we have more full dress than undress. As I have already noted we have very little material indeed with which to show the dress of warrant- and petty-officers and seamen. Recently we have been able to acquire the sailor-suit King Edward VII wore as a boy on board the royal yacht. It was made for him by a seaman tailor on board. We have few uniforms of Royal Marines but I believe a representative collection can be seen at the Royal Marine barracks. The regulations 1843-56 are represented by a lieutenant's full-dress coat. Except for a change in epaulettes this coat continued thus until 1856. The uniform, full dress, of a medical





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1. Uniform coat worn by Major-General Tooker Collins of the Marines, about 1783. The Rear-Admiral's undress frock was of similar pattern, 1783-87.
2. Flag-officer's undress coat, 1795-1812. As worn by Vice-Admiral Lord Nelson, with epaulettes and embroidered stars of the four orders of chivalry. The same as the Trafalgar coat.
3. Captain's full dress coat, 1787-95.
4. Captain's full dress coat, 1795-1812. These two Captain's coats belonged to Captain Alexander Hood, killed in action commanding H.M.S. *Mars*, 1798.



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5. Back view of a Rear-Admiral's coat, 1812-25.
6. Full dress uniform of a Commander, 1825-27. Uniform of Commander Wells, R.N.
7. Full dress uniform of a surgeon, 1863-75. The coat, single breasted, buttons in three's, scarlet velvet introduced between the stripes.
8. Uniform of a Captain of 1918 wearing a frock coat.



inspector of hospitals and fleets, shows the coat single breasted, nine buttons placed in threes, the date 1846-56. The full dress uniform of an admiral, wearing vice-admiral's epaulettes, belonged to Sir Charles Napier. The third stripe, denoting the full admiral, has the curl introduced in 1856, but the coat otherwise follows the 1846 regulations as regards width of lace, etc. The captain's undress uniform of 1856-63 is interesting as showing the curl and the captain's uniform before he was given a fourth stripe. The uniform cap is much smaller than the cap worn to-day. A committee sat on naval uniform in 1856 and decided that the uniforms of the military and civilian branches should be distinguished by distinction lace, and the executive should have a circle in the centre of the upper row, that is the curl. By epaulettes, all officers of the military branch to have gold edges to the straps and devices embroidered in silver; all officers of the civil branch to have silver edging to the straps and devices embroidered in gold and silver. By cocked hats, the military branch to have bullion and flat tassels, civil branch to have flat gold lace. By service cap, the military badge to be a crown embroidered in gold and silver over a silver anchor surrounded by gold laurel leaves. The civil branch's badge to have the same device embroidered in gold.

The surgeon's uniform, full dress, of 1863-75 is interesting as the single-breasted coat has nine buttons in threes, scarlet velvet has been introduced between the stripes and, of course, the upper stripe has no curl. The epaulettes differ from the executive officer's epaulettes in having a silver device and edging. The commodore is in undress and the lieutenant in full dress. A lieutenant of the Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers, established in 1873, is represented by his full dress. His uniform is the same as that of a lieutenant save that the distinction lace is formed of two waved lines of  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. gold braid and the letters R.N.A.V. appear on the buttons and the title in full on the epaulettes.

The captain of 1891 is practically in the full dress which was discarded in 1939, and his buttons with the crown and fowl anchor, on a smooth base have the crown which was given up in King Edward VII's reign and is to be restored. Excellent official coloured plates make the regulations of 1891 easier to follow than appears from a glance at the text in the Navy List of the period. We will only mention the nineteenth-century uniforms. We have Jellicoe's full dress as Admiral of the Fleet in 1919, which will look better when we have added the medals to the aiguillettes he wears as A.D.C. to the King. We have a captain with frock coat and sword of 1918, a commander in full dress of 1939, a master of the Merchant Navy in the uniform established in 1919; a sub-lieutenant, R.N.V.R. in frock coat and cocked hat, with his sword and 'scales', the epaulette without the bullion. We also

have Admiral Cunningham's monkey jacket and cap which he wore at the battle of Matapan in March 1941; Lord Cunningham was promoted Admiral of the Fleet in 1943 and the stripes on his monkey jacket altered accordingly.

I hope that after tea you will all find your way into Neptune's Hall to see the display of naval uniforms and that we shall be getting gifts to make our selection more representative, especially gifts of old uniforms, undress uniforms and the uniforms and dress of the warrant- and petty-officers and seamen.

## APPENDIX

During the lecture original material was exhibited covering the uniform regulations between 1748 and 1812, after which date the regulations are printed in the official Navy Lists. Up to 1783 the relevant extracts are included in the body of the lecture. This appendix includes uniform regulations between 1787 and 1812 which are not easily found elsewhere.

3 October 1787	Flag Officers only	London Gazette, No. 12927
17 November 1787	General order	Admiralty Circular
1 June 1795	General order	Admiralty Circular
4 June 1805	Medical Officers	Sick and Wounded Office Circular
7 August 1807	Masters and Pursers	London Gazette, No. 16054
22 September 1810	Commissioners	London Gazette, No. 16406
23 March 1812	General order	Admiralty Circular

London Gazette. 12927

3 October 1787

The King having signified his pleasure to my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that the uniform cloathing at present worn by the Flag Officers of His Majesty's Fleet shall be altered in the manner mentioned at the foot hereof; and that Commodores having Captains under them, the First Captain to the Admiral of the Fleet, the First Captains to Admirals commanding in chief squadrons of twenty sail of the line or more, shall be distinguished by wearing the same frock uniform as Rear Admirals; Their Lordships do hereby give notice thereof to all Flag Officers, Commodores having Captains under them, and First Captains to Admirals above mentioned and require and direct them to conform strictly thereto.

Such Flag Officers, however, as are provided with the uniforms in present use, are permitted to wear the same, if they think fit for one year from the date hereof.

P. STEPHENS

### Full Dress

Admirals. A blue coat, laced with gold lace, and loops of the same on both sides regular; three on the flap; stand-up collar, with two laces; white cloth cuffs, with three laces; white silk lining; gilt buttons, with a small anchor in the centre encircled with a laurel; white cloth waistcoat, plain; three buttons to the flap; white cloth breeches.

Vice Admirals. The same with only two laces to the cuffs.

Rear Admirals. The same with only one lace to the cuffs.



## Undress

Admirals. A blue cloth coat with blue lappels, cuffs and collar; embroidered button holes like those now in use, regular in the lappel; three to the flap; three on the cuff and three behind; buttons same as above; white cloth waistcoat and breeches, plain.

Vice Admirals. The same with button holes three and three.

Rear Admirals. The same with button holes two and two.

*N.B.* Patterns of the lace and buttons above mentioned may be seen at the Admiralty Office and Navy Office.

Admiralty Office, 17 November 1787

The King having signified to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, his royal pleasure, that the frock uniform cloathing at present worn by the Flag Officers of his Majesty's Fleet, and the uniform cloathing now worn by the Captains, Masters and Commanders, Lieutenants, and Midshipmen of his Majesty's Navy, shall be altered in the manner mentioned at the foot hereof; and also that the uniform cloathing hereafter described, shall be worn by the Warrant Officers and Masters' Mates of his Royal Navy: Their Lordships do hereby give notice thereof to all Flag Officers, Captains, Masters and Commanders, Lieutenants, Warrant Officers, Masters' Mates, and Midshipmen above mentioned, and require and direct them to comply strictly therewith. Such officers, however, as are provided with the uniforms in present use, are permitted to wear the same if they think fit, until they have occasion to make up new suits of cloaths.

P. STEPHENS

## Admirals' Frocks

Blue coat, with blue lappels and cuffs, gold-laced holes, three, pointing at the ends with the distinction in the disposition of them, for the different ranks as before; stand-up collar, with one hole on each side, three holes on the flap, three on the outside cuff, and three behind; white lining, new anchor buttons, with laurels, same as to the full dress.

## Captains, Post of Three Years—Full Dress

Blue coat, with white lappels and cuffs, laced with gold-lace, the pockets double, laced, round cuff, with two laces, three buttons to the pockets, and cuffs, blue stand-up collar, double-laced white linings, new buttons, with the anchor in an oval; white cloth waistcoat, and breeches plain.

## Captains, Post of Three Years—Frocks

Blue cloth coat, blue lappels, and round cuffs, fall down collar, gold-laced holes, square at both ends, regular in the lappels, two to the pocket, and two to the cuffs, and none behind: white lining, buttons same as above; white cloth waistcoat, and breeches plain.

## Captains, under Three Years—Full Dress

Blue coat, with white lappels and cuffs laced with gold lace, the pocket once laced, round cuff with one lace; three buttons to pockets and cuffs; blue stand-up collar, double laced, white lining, buttons as above; white cloth waistcoat, and breeches plain.

## Captains, under Three Years—Frocks

Blue coat, blue lappels, and the same round cuffs, fall-down collars, gold lace holes, square at both ends, nine holes in the lappel by threes, two to the pockets, and two to the cuffs, none behind: white lining, buttons same as above; white cloth waistcoat, and breeches plain.

## Masters' and Commanders' Full Dress

Blue cloth coat, with blue lappels, and the same round cuffs laced with gold lace, the pockets once laced, and one on the cuffs, three buttons to each, stand-up collar double laced, white lining, buttons as above; white cloth waistcoat, and breeches plain.

## Masters' and Commanders' Frocks

Blue cloth coat, with blue lappels, round cuffs, and fall-down collar, gold lace holes, square at each end, ten in the lappels by two's; two to the pockets, and two to the cuff, none behind; white lining, buttons as above; white cloth waistcoat, and breeches plain.

## Lieutenants' Full Dress

Blue cloth coat, with white lappels, and the same round cuffs, holes regular in the lappels, three buttons to the pockets, and three on the cuffs, stand-up collar, white lining, buttons same as the Captains; white cloth waistcoat, and breeches.

## Undress

Blue cloth coat, edged with white cloth, blue lappels, and the same round cuffs, three buttons to the pockets and cuffs, stand-up collar, buttons as above; white cloth waistcoat, and breeches.

## Warrant Officers

Blue cloth coat, with blue lappels, and round cuffs, fall-down collar, three buttons to the pocket and cuff, white lining, but not edged with white, buttons, with an anchor, same as the Captains' former one; white cloth waistcoat, and breeches.

## Masters' Mates

Blue cloth coat, edged with white, no lappels, blue round cuffs, with three buttons, and three to the pocket; fall-down collar, white lining, buttons same as Warrant Officers; white cloth waistcoat, and breeches.

## Midshipmen

Blue cloth coat, no lappel, blue round cuff, with three buttons, and three to the pockets; stand-up collar, with small white turnback as before, white lining, but not edged, buttons same as Warrant Officers; white cloth waistcoat, and breeches.

Admiralty Office, 1 June 1795

The King having signified to my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, his royal pleasure, that the uniform cloathing at present worn, by his Flag Officers, Captains and Commanders, of his Royal Navy, shall be altered in the manner undermentioned:

## Flag Officers' Full Dress

Blue coat, with blue lappels, and round cuffs, the lappels to have one row of gold lace, and the cuffs and pockets two, laced button holes; two gold epaulets; gold-laced hats, white lining, white waistcoat, and breeches.

The rank of the respective Flag Officers to be distinguished as follows, viz.

Admirals. Three silver stars on each epaulet, and three rows of lace on the sleeves.

Vice Admirals. Two silver stars on each epaulet, and two rows of lace on the sleeves.

Rear Admirals. One silver star on each epaulet, and one row of lace on the sleeves.

## Flag Officers' Undress

Plain blue coat, lappelled, with the buttons now in use on the sleeves and pockets; rank to be distinguished by the epaulets and rows of lace, as on the full dress.

## • Captains, Post of Three Years—Full Dress

Blue coat, with blue lappels, and long slash sleeves, as formerly worn, the lappels to have one row of gold lace, and the cuffs and pockets two; two plain gold epaulets, white lining, white waistcoat, and breeches, gold-laced hats.



## Captains, Post of Three Years—Undress

Plain blue coats, lappelled, buttons on the sleeve and pockets, epaulets to take off and put on occasionally, plain hats, and blue breeches, as may be convenient.

## Captains, under Three Years—Full Dress

The same in every respect as Post Captains of Three Years, but to wear only one epaulet on the right shoulder.

## Undress—The same

The same as Post Captains of Three Years, with the difference only of wearing but one epaulet, as in the full dress.

## Commanders' Full Dress

The same as Post Captains, with a plain gold epaulet on the left shoulder.

## Undress—The same

The same as Post Captains, with a plain gold epaulet, as in the full dress, to take off and put on occasionally.

*N.B.* The lace to be the same pattern as was in use previous to the year 1787, but that to be worn by Flag Officers to be of greater breadth than that of the Captains.

Pattern suits with laces and buttons may be seen at the Admiralty Office.

## Medical Officers' Uniform. 1805

(Reference Admiralty Records ADM/F/36)

Circular.

SICK AND WOUNDED OFFICE

To the Medical Officers of the  
Royal Navy respectively.

4th June 1805

Sir,

His Majesty having been pleased by his Order in Council of the 23rd of January last, to direct, that the Medical Officers of the Royal Navy should wear a distinguishing uniform, and have a similar rank with the officers of the same class in His Majesty's Land Service, to be subordinate, however, to that of the Lieutenants of the ships and vessels wherein they may be employed, during the period of their service although their appointments may be of prior dates. We do hereby signify the same for your information, and that the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty have been pleased to direct that the following uniform shall be worn:

## PHYSICIANS

## Full Dress

Blue cloth coat, with blue cloth lappels, cuffs and collar, collar to stand up, two rows of gold lace half an inch wide round the cuffs and collar, three buttons on pockets and cuffs, white lining, white cloth waistcoat and breeches, plain hats.

## Undress

Blue cloth coat, blue lappels, and round cuffs, three buttons on cuffs and pockets, fall down blue collar, waistcoat and breeches white or blue cloth, as may be convenient.

## SURGEONS

## Full Dress

Coat the same as the Physician with the exception of gold lace, white cloth waistcoat and breeches, plain hat. Surgeons of hospitals to wear two embroidered button-holes on the collar; Surgeons of ships, one.

## Undress

Coat the same as the Physician, but without buttons on cuffs or pockets, waistcoats and breeches of white or blue cloth, as may be convenient.

## DISPENSERS OF HOSPITALS

Blue cloth coat lappelled, blue collar to stand up, round cuffs, waistcoat and breeches white or blue, as may be convenient, plain hats.

## ASSISTANT SURGEONS AND HOSPITAL MATES

Blue cloth coat without lappels, plain round cuffs, stand up collar, waistcoat and breeches of white or blue cloth, as may be convenient.

All medical officers to wear the sword established for officers of the Navy.

Those serving afloat to wear a button with a plain anchor in an oval. Those serving in hospitals to wear a similar button, with the addition of H.S. (for Hospital Staff).

A pattern of the uniform may be seen at our office.

London Gazette, 16054

Admiralty Office, 7 August 1807

The King having signified to my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty his royal pleasure that the following uniform clothing shall in future be worn by the Masters and Pursers in his Royal Navy, their Lordships do hereby give notice thereof to all Masters and Pursers in His Majesty's Royal Navy accordingly, and require and direct them to conform strictly thereto.

## Full Dress

Blue cloth coat, with blue lappels, cuffs, and collar, collar to stand up, three buttons on pockets and cuffs, white lining, white cloth waistcoat and breeches; plain hat.

## Undress

Blue cloth coat, blue lappels and round cuffs, fall down blue collar; waistcoat and breeches of white or blue cloth as may be convenient.

The buttons worn by the Masters to bear the arms of the Navy Office, and by the Pursers those of the Victualling Office.

And the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty do hereby further give notice, that the uniform directed, in pursuance of His Majesty's order of the 17th November 1787, to be worn by the Warrant Officers of His Majesty's Fleet, viz. 'Blue cloth coat, with blue lappels and round cuffs, fall down collar, three buttons to the pocket and cuff, white lining, but not edged with white; button with an anchor, same as the Captains' former one; white cloth waistcoat and breeches, shall be worn only by Gunners, Boatswains, and Carpenters; and the subordinate classes of Warrant Officers shall not be allowed to wear lappels.

W. W. POLE

London Gazette, No. 16406

Admiralty Office, 22 September 1810

The King having signified to my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty his royal pleasure that those Post Captains of His Majesty's Navy, who, being Commissioners of the Navy, Victualling, or Transport Service, may have been passed over at any Flag promotion, by officers junior to themselves being promoted to the rank of Rear Admirals, shall be allowed to wear the undress uniform of a Rear Admiral of His Majesty's Fleet, with the deviations undermentioned, viz.

The epaulettes to be without the star of those worn by Rear Admirals, and in all respects similar to those worn by Post Captains.

The buttons to contain the arms of the Navy Office (Three anchors), or of the Victualling Office (Two anchors crossed saltier wise), or of the Transport Office (One anchor and one cannon crossed saltier wise) as the case may be, respectively surrounded with laurel.



And also that those Post Captains who may be Commissioners of the Navy, Victualling, or Transport Service, but from their seniority have *not* been passed over, shall continue to wear the uniform of their rank without any deviation whatever.

Their Lordships hereby give notice thereof in order that the Captains above mentioned may conform thereto.

J. BARROW

Admiralty Office, 23 March 1812

His Royal Highness the Prince Regent hath, in the name and on the behalf of the King, signified to my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the royal pleasure, that the uniform clothing at present worn by the Flag Officers, Captains, Commanders, Lieutenants, Masters-Mates, and Midshipmen of His Majesty's Royal Navy, shall be altered in the manner under-mentioned, namely:

#### ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET

##### Full Dress

Coat of blue cloth, blue cloth collar, white cloth lappells and cuffs, with five laces round the cuffs; laced as at present. Epaulettes as at present; buttons the same as at present, with the addition of a crown over the anchor.

##### Undress

Blue cloth, blue cloth collar, white lappells and cuffs with five laces; laced round the collar and lappells to the end of the skirts; flap and frame, hips and back skirts laced; twist button holes in lappells and flaps as at present; epaulettes and buttons same as in the dress uniform.

#### ADMIRALS

##### Full Dress

The same as the Admiral of the Fleet, with only four laces on the cuffs.

#### VICE-ADMIRALS

The same with only three laces on the cuffs.

#### REAR-ADMIRALS

The same with only two laces on the cuffs.

The epaulettes, with the respective distinctions of three, two, and one star, the same as at present. Buttons as at present, with the addition of a crown over the anchor.

The undress or frock uniform of Flag Officers, except the Admiral of the Fleet, to be the same as at present, with the alteration only of the button.

The Captain to the Admiral of the Fleet, and First Captains to Commanders in Chief, (if not Flag Officers) to wear, while so employed, the undress or frock uniform of Rear-Admirals.

Captains and Commanders of His Majesty's Fleet to wear uniforms of the same pattern.

The full dress to be similar to that now in use, excepting that the lappells and cuffs are in future to be white, laced as at present, with a crown over an anchor on the button.

Captains and Commanders are both to wear two epaulettes, of the same pattern as at present, with only the following distinctions:

The epaulettes of Captains three years post, to have an addition of a silver crown over a silver anchor.

The epaulettes of Captains under three years post, to have the silver anchor without the crown.

The epaulettes of Commanders to be plain.

Lieutenants of His Majesty's Fleet to wear a dress uniform of the same pattern as Captains and Commanders, but without any lace, and with one plain epaulette (similar to that now worn by Captains and Commanders) on the right shoulder; buttons of the same pattern as for Captains.

The undress or frock uniform of Captains, Commanders, and Lieutenants, to be the same as at present worn by Captains and Commanders, with the addition of the epaulettes and button, which are to be worn the same as in the full dress.

The whole of the Commissioned Officers of His Majesty's Fleet to have the linings of their dressed uniforms, white. The Flag Officers only, to have the linings of their dressed uniforms, *white silk*.

Masters-Mates, and Midshipmen to wear the same uniform as at present, with the alteration of the button only, which is to be of the same pattern as that of the Captains and Lieutenants.

Their Lordships do hereby give notice thereof to all Flag Officers, Captains, Commanders, Lieutenants, Masters-Mates, and Midshipmen, and require and direct them strictly to conform thereto. The said alterations being to take effect generally on the 12th August 1812; but such officers of the Royal Navy as may have occasion, before that period, to make up new uniforms, are at liberty to have them made up according to the new patterns.

*N.B.* The several patterns may be seen at this office.

J. W. CROKER

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## THE EVOLUTION OF THE KNÖRR

*By G. J. Marcus*

THE progress of shipbuilding in the North is closely associated with the development of the Norwegian iron industry. This made possible the production of an abundance of iron tools, of which the iron axe was the most important. With these tools, and with the almost illimitable supplies of timber available in the forests of Norway, the Norsemen attained, in the early Middle Ages, a remarkable proficiency in house- and ship-building. The progress of ship-design in the North can be clearly established, first, by the evidence of archaeology, and, latterly, by the testimony of early Scandinavian literature.

The fourth-century Nydam craft is clincher-built and double-ended, with considerable sheer and high stem and stern-post. Incorporated in this vessel is the distinctive principle of construction which may be observed in the Hjortspring boat some six centuries earlier, and which is also applied to the sea-going craft of a later era. The planking which forms the vessel's skin is lashed, not riveted, to the frame timbers: the ribs rest on lugs or cleats which project from the planks; and the cleats are bound to the ribs with bast cords. The Nydam craft is not fitted with a true keel, but with a broad plank projecting only very slightly below the bottom of the vessel. A steering-paddle is lashed to the starboard quarter. There is no sign of a mast. The Nydam craft was propelled by fifteen oars on each side. It was a rowing-boat pure and simple. The Kvalsund craft, which dates from approximately the early seventh century, may be said to represent the half-way stage between the Nydam boat and the fully developed longship of the Viking age. Something much nearer to a proper keel is incorporated in the Kvalsund craft, and it has also far more substantial scantlings; its beam, too, is greater in proportion to its length, thus giving the ship greater stability. Whereas the lower strakes are secured to the ribs with lashings, the strakes above the water-line are fastened with wooden nails. Further, the rudder is stepped to the starboard quarter by a device which, while giving the blade requisite play, keeps it clear of the vessel's side. The Kvalsund craft ushered in the new era of Scandinavian maritime enterprise and expansion. The first Norse voyages across the North Sea may well have been made in vessels of this type.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Professor Shetelig told the present writer that it was quite possible that the Kvalsund vessel was fitted with mast and sail. He explained that though no trace of a mast-fish or mast-partner had been found, this might well be due to the fact that the vessel had been broken up and partly burned before its interment.

Judging by the evidence of the Gotland sculptured stones, vessels which in some respects closely resembled the Gokstad craft were already at sea in the eighth century.<sup>1</sup> In the Gokstad craft, which dates from the latter half of the ninth century, the distinctive method of lashing the planking to the frame timbers is retained in respect of the eight lower strakes.<sup>2</sup> Such a method of fastening, which allowed of a very much thinner planking than would have been possible with the strakes simply nailed to the frames, was in large measure responsible for the extraordinary buoyancy and elasticity of the Viking craft: the whole structure could give without breaking.<sup>3</sup> The frames themselves are not fastened directly to the keel (but only indirectly by means of the garboard strakes) and rest loosely in shallow grooves on the keelson. The side-rudder, secured to a wooden boss on the vessel's starboard quarter by means of a withy, is controlled by an athwart-ship tiller. The vessel is propelled both by sail and by oars. Unlike its forerunners, the Gokstad ship is fitted with a proper external keel. It now became possible for these Northern craft to face gales and heavy seas: to sail with a beam wind, or even nearer to the wind. The Gokstad ship is beyond comparison the finest and best preserved of all the Viking craft which have come down to us through the ages.

It is to be emphasized that all the ships of the Viking era which have survived—from the Gokstad to the Ladby vessel—are longships, not merchantmen.<sup>4</sup> The probability is that the vessels which transported the Norse emigrants, with all their livestock, farm and household gear and personal belongings, to the Orkneys and Shetlands in the late eighth and early ninth centuries were early types of *knörr*<sup>5</sup> or *hafskip* (ocean-going merchantmen). For the traffic to the west of Ireland and the Faeroe Islands, it is even less likely that *langskip* were used. The *knörr* appears to have developed on parallel lines during the same period that saw the evolution of the longship. The evolution of the *knörr*, which made possible the colonization of Iceland and Greenland in the ninth and tenth centuries, was unquestionably the crucial factor in the nascent ocean navigation of the

1 Sune Lindqvist, *Gotlands Bildsteine* (1942), Vol. 1, figs. 35, 43, 49, 51, 53; Brøgger and Shetelig, *The Viking Ships* (1951), p. 70.

2 Above the water-line (as in the Kvalsund vessel) the planking is riveted to the frames.

3 See Brøgger and Shetelig, *op. cit.* p. 142; Nils Vigeland, *Norge på havet* (1953), pp. 32 *et passim*.

4 The only portion of a Norse merchantman's hull which has so far come to light consists of a number of ship's boards, excavated by the late Konservator Bernhard Faerøvik, shortly after the Second World War, in Bergen: see Faerøvik in *Bergens Sjøfartsmuseum Arshefte* (1948) pp. 26-7, 30-1, 41-2.

5 The word *knörr* is found in Old Danish as *knar*; in Faeroese, as *knörrur*; also in Old Irish, as *cnarr*. *Knörr* has often been rendered into English as 'cog', 'buss', and even 'galley'. All these interpretations are misleading; especially the last.

Norsemen. The opening up of the new sea-routes reflected the steady advance of Scandinavian shipbuilding.

The *hafskip*, though embodying the distinctive principle of design and construction noted above, differed in certain important respects from the *langskip*. It was somewhat shorter than the longship: it drew more water; it was broader in the beam and of a much greater freeboard; in strong winds it was a faster sailer.<sup>1</sup> Like the *langskip* the *hafskip* was clincher-built and double-ended, and was driven by one large square-sail spread on a yard, which was hoisted and lowered by a halyard (the halyard served also as a backstay). The mast, consisting of a single pole of spruce or fir, was supported by shrouds, two of which were fastened to the gunwale on either side, and by a forestay, leading from the mast-head to the prow. Experience seems to have shown that ships of this type sailed better without any elaborate rigging. The lightness and simplicity of the ship's tackle were in keeping with the light and flexible structure of the ship's hull. Both tackle and anchor-cable were usually made of walrus-hide (*svardhreip*) on account of its great natural strength. Little is known about the sails used in these vessels, except that each type of *hafskip* had its own distinctive sail, and that a well-cut sail was then (as now) held in great esteem among mariners. The cargo (*búlki*), covered over with ox-hides—on top of which was lashed the ship's boat—was stowed in an open hold amidships. The look-out was kept from the *búlkabrún*, or edge of the cargo-stack. The oars, which were few in number, were fitted fore and aft: they were commonly used for getting the vessel in and out of port, and for assisting her to go about: they would be useless on a lee shore,<sup>2</sup> or in bad weather. The *knörr* was essentially a sailing vessel.<sup>3</sup> Like all craft of the Viking era, the *knörr* was steered by a side-rudder secured to the starboard quarter. The Rebæk rudder, which was recovered by Dr Pöul Nörlund and Captain Carl V. Sölver in 1943, is believed to have come out of a *hafskip*. It is fashioned from a very heavy piece of oak and measures over 13 feet in length. 'The Ræbek rudder apparently belonged to a merchantman of the Viking period or very little later, a *knörr* or a *byrdhingr*, types which are known only from references in literature. This Rebæk rudder has a general resemblance to those of the Gokstad and Oseberg ships, but it differs in several respects, particularly in being much larger. . . . A side-rudder such as this is the most perfect

<sup>1</sup> See *Fornmanna sögur* (1827), Vol. vi, p. 249.

<sup>2</sup> Thus no attempt to use the oars was made on the occasion of the shipwreck off Hornstrandir, on the north Iceland coast, in the *Gudmundar saga*: see *The Life of Gudmund the Good*, ed. and trans. Turville-Petre and Olszewska (1942), p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> 'Byrr var á blásandi ok gekk knörrinn brátt mikit. . . byrjaði honum vel til Íslands' (*Fornmanna sögur*, Vol. vi, p. 249).



thing of its kind and must have been the outcome of a long process of development.<sup>1</sup>

In the thirteenth-century Icelandic sagas, there are many references to the use of the spar known as the *beitiðss* for sailing on a wind.<sup>2</sup> This was certainly no innovation. The art of sailing on a beam wind, and even of tacking, can be traced at least as far back as the Viking Age. The wooden blocks for securing the *beitiðss* can still be seen in the Gokstad craft: they are nailed to the vessel's sides abreast of the mast. One end of the *beitiðss* was inserted in a socket in one of these blocks and the other was placed in a cringle in the weather leech of the square-sail in order to prevent the sail from shaking while sailing on a wind; thus enabling the vessel to sail closer to the wind. Without the *beitiðss* the ship might sail with a beam wind, but would not be able to 'bite' into the wind—i.e. beat to windward. The maximum close-hauling which could be achieved by this means was called *at aka segli at endilöngu skipi*. It would appear, however, that though the Norse *hafskip* could sail close-hauled, it only did so over comparatively limited distances, e.g. for making an Iceland or Greenland haven. There is no record of ships sailing by the wind for protracted periods. The usual procedure, as we know from a number of passages in the sagas, was for the crew to anchor and wait for a fair wind. On the high sea, when the wind hauled ahead and blew a dead muzzler, the crew simply allowed the vessel to drift. The *beitiðss* was also used to spread the sail when sailing with a following wind. The disposition of the sockets in the wooden blocks shows clearly that the *beitiðss* was thus used when running free, as well as when sailing on a wind.

No trace of a *vindáss*, or windlass, was found on board the Gokstad craft. This may possibly be due, as Captain Sölver has suggested, to the fact that in vessels of this size it was not really necessary: the anchor could easily be hoisted up by hand.<sup>3</sup> At any rate in the last part of the twelfth century, as is clear from the *Gudmundar saga*, the *vindáss* was in use in the larger craft of Scandinavia for raising the sail-yard. Pumps were not used on shipboard until after the Viking Age. In the *Grettis saga* it is clearly stated that, in the time of Grettir, there were no pumps fitted in ocean-going craft. The old method of baling was with bilge-buckets, as described in the *Fóstræðhra*

1 Carl V. Sölver, in *The Mariner's Mirror*, Vol. xxxii, pp. 115–20.

2 The Icelandic sagas, which are so often full of anachronisms—e.g. in the realm of law—are usually sufficiently dependable in matters relating to shipbuilding, seamanship and navigation. (Among the rare exceptions may be mentioned the well-known anachronism in the *Heimskringla* concerning the discovery of the Faeroe Islands; and there is another in connexion with the Skania herring fishery.) Over and over again we find that the testimony of the sagas is borne out by that of far earlier sources and by the evidence of archaeology. The factor of continuity in these matters is, in fact, quite remarkable.

3 Carl V. Sölver, *Om Ankre* (1945), p. 65.

saga.<sup>1</sup> In the sagas reference is made to different kinds of anchors: the *stjóri*, which was evidently a killick, and the *akkeri*, which was a real anchor made of wrought iron and fitted with a wooden stock.<sup>2</sup> The *akkeri* of the Viking Age bears a remarkable resemblance to the iron anchor of the Mediterranean. The name as well as the form, indeed, betrays its foreign origin. In Old Norse it is always *akkeri*; in Old Swedish, *akkæri*; in Old Danish, *akkæræ*; in Anglo-Saxon, *ancor*; in High German, *ancher*. How and when the iron anchor was introduced into Scandinavia, however, remains obscure.

The *knörr* appears to have been fully as seaworthy as many later vessels of much greater tonnage. It plied for centuries on what was unquestionably the longest and most formidable ocean passage known to the medieval world—the Greenland trade-route. With its light, flexible construction it would rise easily to the scend of the heavy western sea; cases of shipwreck in the open Atlantic were rare; and the sagas relate how it rode out many a hard gale. Moreover, certain of the early *knerrir*, like the *Stígandi*, were famous 'flyers'.<sup>3</sup> The danger of *sagging* (i.e. compressive stresses amidships when the vessel was poised between the two wave-crests) was inconsiderable in view of the relative shortness of the *hafskip*; while the risk of *hogging* (i.e. when the stresses are reversed) was comparatively slight, since the cargo on board the *hafskip* was always carried amidships. The lightness and elasticity of the *hafskip*—resulting from the peculiar method of construction already remarked upon—helped to make possible the hazardous manoeuvre of running in under sail through a heavy sea (*sigla til brots*), of which occasional mention is made in the *Landnámabók* and the Icelandic annals and sagas. Thus, when set on a lee shore and in dire straits, a crew would sometimes steer straight for the land in the hope of saving life, even if ship and cargo had to be sacrificed.

As has already been said, the earliest type of *knörr* was probably evolved some time before the close of the eighth century, during the great formative era of the *vestrvíking*, when the Norsemen were already making long passages in the Atlantic to the Hebrides, Ireland and the Faeroe Islands. The antiquity of the *knörr* is evidenced by a number of references in the *Landnámabók* and other early sources. In an ancient poem mention is made

1 Two men were told off for the baling: one stood below in the baling-well and the other on deck. The former filled the bucket and handed it up to his mate; and the latter hauled it to the gunnel and emptied it over the side. See *Flateyjarbók* (1860), Vol. II, pp. 204–5.

2 During the excavation, in 1937, of the Viking ship at Ladby in Denmark the discovery was made, in the forepart of the vessel, of an iron anchor complete with anchor-rope and chain fore-runner. The discovery casts a revealing light on the technical skill and seamanship of the Viking era. See Carl V. Sölver in *Acta Archaeologica*, Vol. XVII, pp. 122, 126.

3 *Landnámabók*, ed. F. Jónsson (1900), pp. 60, 184.

of two *knerrir* which took part in the naval battle of Hafrsfjörd.<sup>1</sup> According to the *Landnámabók*, it was in a *knörr* built in northern Scotland that Aud the Wise voyaged to the Faeroe Islands and later to Iceland. It is said that Grím and Kveld-Úlf also made the passage to Iceland in a *knörr*; and the merchant Thórir went out in a *knörr* which he had had built in the forests of Sogn.<sup>2</sup> It is significant, too, that some of the oldest place-names in Iceland were named after the *knörr*.<sup>3</sup> By the latter half of the ninth century the Norsemen had evolved a sturdy, ocean-going craft, variously known as the *kaupskip*, *hafskip*, or *knörr*, which was capable of transporting between forty and sixty persons, a small stock of cattle, the necessary food and fodder, and all the usual farm and household gear, across several hundred miles of open sea. The *Landnámabók* tells of a number of vessels which arrived in Iceland heavily laden with livestock and gear: of the craft in which Thórólf Móstrarkegg voyaged to Iceland, together with his wife and children, many of his friends, his household gear, and a heavy cargo of timber; of another craft which 'arrived in the estuary of Kolbein's river, laden with livestock'; of the vessel in which Helgi brought out a stock of cattle to Iceland, along with his wife and children; of the two *knerrir* in which Grím and Kveld-Úlf made the passage, each carrying a cargo of timber in addition to a crew of some thirty men; of the *knörr* in which Aud the Wise voyaged to Iceland, accompanied by her family, friends, and thralls, and twenty freedmen besides.<sup>4</sup> It was with such craft as these that the great emigration to Iceland—an event altogether unprecedented in European history—was accomplished.

The reserves of merchant shipping possessed by the Norsemen at the time of the Settlement were surprisingly ample. About thirty-five of their chieftains, it is explicitly recorded in the *Landnámabók*, came out to Iceland in their own ships. The expedition of Ketill-Haeng comprised two, that of Geirmund the Swarthy four, ocean-going merchantmen. When the three sons of Thorgeir Vestarsson made the passage, each sailed in his own craft.<sup>5</sup> By about 900, when the emigration was at its height, the number of ships engaged in the traffic must have been considerable; in certain years the greater part of two thousand persons are believed to have made the passage.

1 See *Heimskringla*, ed. F. Jónsson (1936), p. 53:

'knerrir kómu austan,  
kaps of lystir,  
með gínöndun höfðum,  
ok gröfnum tígllum.'

Cf. *Íslendinga sögur*, ed. G. Jónsson (1946), Vol. II, pp. 98, 190, 277.

2 *Landnámabók*, pp. 138, 157, 200.

4 *Ibid.* pp. 138, 152, 157, 189, 193.

3 *Ibid.* pp. 139, 204, 225.

5 *Ibid.* pp. 186, 205, 217.



In view of the far greater number of *langskip* which are recorded to have composed the Viking fleets of the ninth and tenth centuries, however, this is no more than might be expected.

Towards the end of the tenth century Greenland was colonized from Iceland. According to the *Landnámabók*, the majority of the emigrants made the passage, about the year 985, in fourteen vessels (eleven other craft, sailing for Greenland about this time, were either driven back again or lost).<sup>1</sup> Once again a fleet of 'floating Noah's Arks' passed overseas to settle the empty lands. The colonization of Greenland marked the final stage of Norse expansion to the westward. A few *knerrir* did, indeed, arrive off the eastern seaboard of North America in the early years of the next century: but the attempt to found a permanent settlement there ended in failure. In 999 Leif Eiríksson made the first direct passage from Greenland to Europe. The following summer he sailed back across the Atlantic. These passages inaugurated the first transatlantic trade-route in history. During the next four hundred years a more or less regular traffic passed to and fro between Norway and Greenland. Vessels outward-bound now shaped a course between the Shetlands and the Faeroe Islands, and after that steered due west across the Atlantic. 'The crossing and recrossing of this immense span of open sea—more than 1000 nautical miles—between the Faeroe Islands and a point on the East Greenland coast about 60 miles north of Cape Farewell, may justly be regarded as the supreme achievement of Norse seamanship and navigation. The small, sturdy *knerrir* with their single mast and one square-sail, rising and falling to the scend of the long western seas further from sight of land than any other craft of their day, constituted the one frail tenuous link which bound this far colony of Greenland, for four long centuries, to Christianity and Europe.'<sup>2</sup>

It is apparent from the evidence of the sagas and other sources that the *knörr* was adapted to ocean navigation, and the *langskip* was not. From a certain passage in the *Heimskringla* we learn that it was altogether exceptional for a longship to have as much freeboard as a *hafskip*. It was also said that the sea between the two lands (i.e. between Norway and Iceland) was so wide that longships could not make the crossing. For the same reason the Icelanders would not allow Ólaf the Saint to get possession of Grímsey, on the grounds that that island might be used as a base for 'a great war-fleet cruising from thence in longships'. Even the far less formidable ocean passage between Norway and the Faeroe Islands was considered to be too much for the long, slender *langskip*, with its low freeboard and comparatively frail construction. 'Longships cannot get there

1 *Ibid.* pp. 155-6.

2 G. J. Marcus in *Economic History Review*, Vol. VII, pp. 74-5.

on account of the gales and tidal streams, which are often found to be so strong that a merchantman can scarcely bear up against them.<sup>1</sup> It was in a merchantman, not a longship, that Bjarni Herjólfsson sighted the American coast, and Thorfinn Karlsefni went in search of Vinland. It was similarly in a merchantman that Einar Sokkason arrived in Norway with a cargo of walrus ivory and a live polar-bear. The craft in which the merchant Arnbjörn was wrecked on the East Greenland coast was a large ocean-going trading vessel. The Greenlandman which, under the command of Grimar and Sörli, came to the Vestmannaeyjar in 1218 is described as a *knörr mikill*. It was a *knörr* which carried the Bishop of Greenland to his distant diocese.<sup>2</sup> The widely held belief that the Norsemen voyaged to Greenland and America in longships of the familiar Gokstad type is wholly erroneous.

The *knörr*, in short, was *par excellence* the normal ocean-going sailing ship of the Norsemen till well on in the Middle Ages. During this period it was invariably used for the navigation to the Faeroe Islands, Iceland, and Greenland; and the Icelandic sagas, though written at a time when the *búza* was coming into common use in the North, rightly allude to the *knörr* as the usual ocean-going merchant vessel of the Viking Age. They also mention various individuals associated with the *knörr*. For instance, in the reign of Olaf the Saint there was a shipwright called Thorstein Knarrasmid, who was a renowned builder of *knerrir*; and in the days of Hákon Hákonarson there was a shipowner named Knarrar-Leif, who was entrusted by that monarch with an important mission to Greenland. On most of the Northern sea-routes, during the thirteenth century, the *knörr* was supplanted by the *búza* and the cog. But on the Greenland passage no other type of *hafskip* is recorded down to the end of the Middle Ages.

<sup>1</sup> *Heimskringla*, pp. 128, 165; *Fornmanna sögur*, Vol. iv, p. 284; *Færeyinga saga*, ed. Rafn (1832), p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> *Íslendinga sögur*, Vol. i, pp. 381, 393, 397; *Sturlunga saga*, ed. G. Jónsson (1944), Vol. II, p. 71; *Hauksbók*, ed. F. Jónsson (1892), p. 500.

THE *HERMIONE* MUTINY

By J. D. Spinney

BY all accounts the mutiny on board H.M.S. *Hermione* in 1797 was a very bloody business. The discipline of Captain Pigot was harsh, even for those days, and the story goes that, on the evening of 21 September, when reefing topsails, he called to the men on the mizzen topsail-yard that he would flog the last man down; and that, as a consequence of this, two fell and were killed. Whether this be true or not (and Captain Pigot is also said to have given the callous order to: 'Throw the lubbers overboard'), two nights later the crew mutinied. They murdered nearly all the officers, and took the ship into a Spanish port where they delivered her to the enemy.

Such are the few facts to be found in every standard Naval history. The record could hardly be blacker, and the story is not an edifying one. But interest has caused me to probe further, and it is the object of this paper to present a more detailed account of the affair than has, so far as I know, yet seen the light of day.

The witnesses are still available—in the files of the Public Record Office. Here, among the minutes of long-forgotten Courts Martial, the few surviving officers of the *Hermione* and some of the loyal hands tell their stories, each presenting an account of the mutiny as he saw it, from wherever he happened to be in the ship. Those mutineers who were caught also contribute in their own way, and from all this mass of detail a fairly clear picture emerges of what happened. But it is not a pleasant picture, and anyone averse to bloodshed would be well advised to read no further.

The *Hermione* was a small frigate of 32 guns, one of a numerous but not very satisfactory class built during the previous war. She had been away from home for a long time, mostly in West Indian waters, and had played a small part in a number of minor operations. Her crew numbered about 180, and it has been suggested<sup>1</sup> that it contained an unusually large proportion of Irishmen and foreigners; but her last Muster Book does not confirm this. As far as can be judged, neither the ship nor her crew were in any way out of the ordinary.

But the same cannot be said of her commanding officer. Captain Hugh Pigot has been described, by a contemporary who knew him well, as 'one

1 By Professor Laughton, in his article on Captain Pigot in the *D.N.B.*



of the most cruel and oppressive captains belonging to the Royal Navy':<sup>1</sup> and the number of punishment entries in his Log Books support this verdict. Interest almost certainly hastened his advancement, for he was posted at the early age of twenty-five, and he was only twenty-eight at the time of his death. He had three years of command in West Indian waters (which are not likely to have sweetened his disposition), and he exchanged into the *Hermione*, from a similar ship, the *Success*, in February 1797.

Bitterness and resentment accompanied him on board, for he brought with him from the *Success* twenty-one reluctant seamen whose expectations of a return home under a milder captain were thus disappointed. One can imagine how quickly these men shared their grievances with their new ship-mates. The old hands of the *Hermione* would hear about Michael Sheddy who survived seven floggings in seven months; of James Walsh who died shortly after this punishment; of the desertions which were so numerous where Captain Pigot commanded; and much else.<sup>2</sup>

1797 was Mutiny Year, and by the summer the men in the West Indies must have heard about the Breeze at Spithead, and how much might be achieved by resolute action. Down on the sweltering mess-decks, or swaying high above the ship in the tops, in small groups on the forecastle or anywhere where freedom from observation could be obtained, garbled versions of the news must have been eagerly discussed; and among men accustomed to violence and danger, secret confidences were exchanged, and evil resolves taken.

We may accept or not as we like the story of the events on the evening of 21 September. I have found no reference to them in any of the official papers,<sup>3</sup> but this does not lessen my feeling that the story is substantially true. However, there are two other circumstances which almost certainly contributed to the mutiny breaking out when it did. Until evening on the 22nd, Captain Pigot had been in company with the *Diligence*, brig; but now he made her a signal to stand on a different tack.<sup>4</sup> And, equally important,

1 Quoted by James in his *Naval History*.

2 A contemporary (John Wetherell, whose adventures have recently been published, Michael Joseph, 1954), has suggested that Captain Pigot's predecessor in the *Hermione*, Captain Philip Wilkinson, must share the blame for the mutiny. I am inclined to dispute this. Apart from the fact that Wetherell was very hostile to Captain Wilkinson, the punishment returns of these two officers over a period of twelve months, when commanding in almost identical circumstances, show that while Wilkinson was certainly harsh, Pigot was in a class by himself. The number of floggings ordered over twelve months were: Captain Wilkinson, 30; Captain Pigot, 79.

3 Except the curious fact that Mr Southcott the Master had been hurt a little earlier by a man falling on him from aloft: perhaps one of the two men in question. He was still sick when the mutiny broke out.

4 However, the *Hermione* remained in sight from the *Diligence* until 11 p.m. that night. The two ships were chasing a privateer.

some rum had, with the connivance of the gun-room steward and the 2nd lieutenant's servant, found its way into the fore-castle. . . . So the scene was set for the tragedy as night fell on the evening of 22 September. The *Hermione* was somewhere off the western end of Porto Rico, and heading north on the starboard tack. Captain Pigot and most of the officers had already turned in.

John Brown, a seaman stationed in the main-top, saw how the business started. Shortly after ten o'clock a certain David Forrester, of whom we shall soon hear a great deal, appeared in the top and ordered him down, not by the shrouds, but by the main-stay, which would take him inconspicuously on to the fore-castle. Brown demurred, only to be told that if he did not obey it would be the worse for him. So down he went, and on the fore-castle he found a group of his ship-mates drinking from a bucket of rum, and wrangling over some project they had in mind. 'Wrangling and arguing that they were not fit to go through the business that they were going to do', is how Brown describes it.

Not liking what he had seen, Brown slipped back to his top, and within five minutes heard 'a great noise of shot being thrown against the bulk-heads'. The object of this is not clear, unless it was a signal to rouse the whole ship's company, but the noise was followed by something much less ambiguous, the voice of the sentry at the cabin door shouting out to the officer of the watch on the quarter-deck above, that some people had broken into the cabin.

From the main-top Brown could see and hear what followed. The officer of the watch was the 3rd lieutenant, Mr Foreshaw,<sup>1</sup> and he turned to the master's mate of the watch whose name was Turner, and desired him to go and see what was happening. Turner's reply was that if the lieutenant wanted to know he could go himself. At this, Lieutenant Foreshaw sensed danger, and ordered the helmsman to put the wheel over, so that they might run down on the *Diligence*. The man replied that he would see the lieutenant damned first, whereupon Foreshaw knocked him down. The man shouted for help, and matters then passed from the lieutenant's control.

Meanwhile, in the cabin were the ringleaders, David Forrester, Henry Poulson, and two or three others, determined to murder the captain. Captain Pigot jumped from his cot and seized a sword to defend himself, at the same time calling lustily for his bargemen. In the dim light of the

<sup>1</sup> There is some confusion about this officer's name. Schomberg, in his *Naval Chronology*, and H. W. Wilson, in his article on the mutiny in the *Cornhill Magazine* (1899), give it as Fanshaw. Steel's *Navy List* does not mention him, but all the relevant papers in the P.R.O. refer to him unmistakably as Foreshaw.

cabin he failed to recognize Poulson who was one of them until the latter replied: 'Here are your bargemen: what do you want with them you "....."?' Keeping the men off with his sword, and wounding Forrester slightly in the foot, the captain was driven back to the great stern window of his cabin, and until the last he remonstrated with his assassins, and kept asking if everyone was against him. MacNeal the sentry, peering horrified through the glass of the cabin door, saw him, his nightshirt covered with blood, supporting himself on a gun. Forrester boasted that he had cut him three or four times before thrusting him through the window, and almost his last words were: 'Forrester, are you against me, too?' Badly wounded he splashed into the sea, and was still heard to speak as he passed astern.

The deed was done, and the murderers burst from the cabin waving their weapons and shouting that Hughy was overboard, and the ship their own; and there followed an invasion of the quarter-deck by another dozen or so from the forecastle, who had apparently been waiting for the word. Huzzaing and yelling they surrounded Lieutenant Foreshaw, who was left in no doubt as to their intentions. Desperately he pleaded for his life, protesting that he had a wife and three children entirely dependent on him, and for a moment the mutineers seem to have weakened. But their purpose was stiffened by the arrival of Thomas Nash, who told them succinctly to: 'Heave the "....." overboard'. So, badly cut about the head, Lieutenant Foreshaw passed from sight over the rails between the main and mizzen rigging.

The next thought of the mutineers was for weapons, and it did not take them long to break open the arms chest. Then, in a murderous, shouting mob they swarmed down the ladder to the gun-room, repeating their triumphant cries that Hughy was overboard, and the ship their own. The gun-room was on the lower deck, the cabins opening into it, and already most of the officers down there had become aware that something was wrong, and were bestirring themselves.

Mr Edward Southcott, the master, was awakened from his first sleep, and his first impulse was to be up on deck. In his shirt, and without arms he mounted the gun-room table, with the intention of climbing up through the sky-light. But he was spotted by one of the men, Richard Redmen, who cried out: 'Here is one of the "....." coming up: knock him down.' A handspike descended heavily, and Mr Southcott staggered back into his cabin.

The midshipmen slung their hammocks near the gun-room, and David O'Brien Casey, alarmed at the same time as Mr Southcott, went up by the after-hatchway to investigate. In the half-deck above he found noise, darkness, and confusion, with the men quite out of hand. One told him



that they were striking for liberty, and another advised him to stow himself below, as they meant him no harm. So he slipped quietly back to his hammock, and who shall blame him?

In another cabin was the *Hermione's* marine officer, Lieutenant McIntosh, down with Yellow Fever, and not expected to live. Sergeant John Place, who was looking after him, was disturbed, first by the tumult above, and then by the sudden entry from an adjacent cabin, of Lieutenant Archibald Douglas, completely naked, as he was just out of his cot, with the alarmed enquiry: 'Lord, Sergeant, what is the matter?' They were soon to know, for the same instant a stream of mutineers poured into the gun-room, and above the din could be heard the voice of William Crawley, ordinary seaman, shouting that the first "....." who moved would be instantly put to death. A search of the officers' cabins followed.

Lieutenant Douglas seems to have been the object of their particular animosity, but as he crept under the sick marine officer's cot, they did not at first find him. Mr Southcott had got back into his own cot, his face and shirt covered with blood from the handspike, and the men who surged into his cabin seemed rather contrite at his condition; Redmen, it is true, brandished the broken part of Captain Pigot's sword (a light horseman's sword, with a large silver guard), but he contented himself with striking it into the bulkhead several times, while several men assured the Master that he would not be hurt. In the same friendly spirit some men shook Casey in his hammock, and, learning who he was, advised him to lie still. Sentries were posted over the officer's cabins, and during the pause which followed, Lieutenant Douglas was able to emerge from his hiding place and secure a bed-gown from his own cabin.

But the pause was very brief. The hunt was up for the unpopular Lieutenant Douglas and very soon the men returned, this time headed by Forrester with a lanthorn. The lieutenant came out from his cabin immediately, and was set upon by all at once. Casey saw it from his hammock and turned away his head. Most horrible of all was the conduct of James Allen, the lieutenant's servant, a forward lad of fourteen or fifteen, and the same who had smuggled the rum into the forecastle. 'Let me have a chop at him,' he cried, 'he shall not make me jump about the gun-room any more.' And his was one of the last blows struck.

At this moment came an interruption which probably took the murderers by surprise. The *Hermione's* other midshipman, a boy of fourteen or fifteen called Smith, burst in amongst them. Some sort of scuffle took place, the boy wriggled like an eel and seemed likely to get away, so Forrester and William Crawley struck him down with their tomahawks. The others joined in, and his body joined that of the lieutenant on the grating of the

after-hold.<sup>1</sup> Shouts came from above: 'Hand the ".....s" up', 'Launch the ".....s"', and both were thrown overboard.

So far events have been described as they were observed on the quarter-deck and in the gun-room, with a brief glimpse into the captain's quarters. But after the murder of Lieutenant Douglas and Mr Smith there was a lull. Leaving the remaining officers down below under guard, the mutineers trooped out, and a little while afterwards noises on deck made it clear that they were wearing ship. Meanwhile, in the half-deck was another witness, John Jones the captain's steward, and he has some details of his own to contribute.

He had put Captain Pigot to bed a quarter of an hour before the mutiny broke out, and he was in his hammock when the murderers burst in. Then he got up, and, being a man of peace, busied himself tying up the head of the cabin sentry. While he was thus employed, Forrester came along and tapped him on the shoulder, saying: 'I have just launched your bloody master overboard. . . .' The frightened steward continued his ministrations and replied not a word. After this, Turner and some of the others wanted to know where the captain had kept his keys, and then Redmen appeared with a demand for wine from Captain Pigot's store, and Jones had to get it for him. Redmen followed the steward down and, when given a bottle of Madeira, knocked off the head with his sword and swigged off half a pint before passing the bottle to someone else. He then took two more bottles up with him and, with an unexpected access to kindness, brought some to Mr Southcott in his cabin. Indeed, the master seems to have been well liked. The men brought the surgeon to him under guard, to dress his wounds, and he was repeatedly assured that no harm was intended to him.

Casey too was popular. We have seen how, in the first invasion of the gun-room, one or two of the men warned him to lie still. Now Thomas Nash himself came to him as he lay in his hammock, and tried to persuade him to join the mutineers, saying that the men wanted him for lieutenant. Of course Casey refused.

And now the lull was broken by another interruption, as unexpected as it was horrible. It will be remembered that Lieutenant Foreshaw had been wounded and thrown over the side from the quarter-deck a little earlier. The wretched man had checked his fall on the chain-plates of the main shrouds, and now, after a pause to recover his strength, was painfully making his way in through one of the ports on the half-deck. A group of men by the capstan was startled by the apparition, and John Holford, the captain's cook, describes how one of them looked aft and said: 'Who is that

<sup>1</sup> According to one witness, young Smith had caused a man called Fletcher to be flogged the previous day. Hence the treatment he received from the mutineers.

coming in through the port?' Another replied: 'It is Foreshaw', to which a third brutally added: 'Let him come in and hear what he has to say for himself.'

It is a horrible picture. The blood was streaming down his face from his head. He clapped his hands together and said: 'Good God, men, what have I done to harm you, that I should be treated in this manner?' Some of the men were touched, and replied that they would speak to the ship's company and spare his life. But for a second time the scene was transformed by the appearance of the ferocious Nash who seems to have borne a particular dislike for Mr Foreshaw. He came running down the ladder and seized him by the wrist, saying: 'You "....." Foreshaw, are you not overboard yet? Overboard you must go, and overboard you shall go.' And this settled the poor lieutenant's fate.

The lull in the ship continued for perhaps an hour, perhaps more. It would seem that the councils of the mutineers were divided about killing the other officers, the majority shrinking from further bloodshed, and the more desperate urging that since Hughy was overboard, the others might as well go too.

During these debates the feelings of the remaining officers in the gun-room are best left to the imagination. The first lieutenant, Samuel Reed, came in with his head cut open in two or three places and threw himself on his cot while the surgeon dressed it. The purser, Mr Pacey, was also in need of the surgeon's attention, having been wounded in the cheek by a tomahawk. Both surgeon and purser were disliked by the men, and probably had no illusions as to their fate. Sergeant Place describes them as sitting on two chairs in the gun-room and 'talking together very melancholy'.

Meanwhile, the leading mutineers were coming to a decision. Casey had risen from his hammock and had gone to sit with the melancholy group in the gun-room when Thomas Nash came down again and warned the surgeon and the purser to be prepared for death. At this, Casey (as he tells us) had the temerity to remonstrate with the mutineers, but he was curtly silenced, and went back to his hammock. However, there was still work for Mr Sansum the surgeon before he could be allowed to meet his fate. Some of the *Hermione's* sick needed attention, and he was taken forward to them under guard. To one of these, after asking how he was, the surgeon gloomily mentioned that he himself was going to die; but when the man asked why, the guards, one of whom was Crawley, told him it was no business of his, and that he should hold his tongue, or they would serve him in the same way. The unhappy surgeon finished his round and returned to the gun-room for the final scene.

And now a strange and dramatic figure made his appearance, Laurence



Cronin the surgeon's mate. Until this moment he seems to have played no part in the actual shedding of blood, but his words were to be much more destructive than the cutlasses and the tomahawks. He climbed on to the gun-room table, so that his head projected out from the skylight, and he could address at once both the men crowding round on the deck above, and those in the gun-room below. Then, pulling a paper out of his pocket, he delivered a fiery speech. He was a Republican, he said, and had been one ever since the war began. The mutiny was a very right and a very good thing, but (and this was the point of his discourse), it was necessary that *all* the remaining officers should be killed.

One can make what one likes of this speech, but beneath the farrago of Republican nonsense Cronin's advice was of course absolutely sound. Dead men tell no tales. This bloody-minded surgeon's mate first appears in the *Hermione's* books as a volunteer able seaman, but who or what he really was we shall probably never know. He was never caught to stand his trial, so the references to him are disappointingly meagre. But of his eloquence there can be no doubt. By the time he had finished, a sufficient number of men had been brought into the right frame of mind for the rest of the murders to take place. In smooth and regular succession six more of the officers were handed up and thrown overboard. Some sort of consultation then followed, and it was decided to spare the gunner, the carpenter, and Mr Midshipman Casey.<sup>1</sup>

But over Mr Southcott there was still disagreement. Twenty times during the night attempts were made to have him out of his cabin and murder him, but there were always men who objected. Some may have felt he might still be needed as navigator, for the *Hermione* had been two days out of sight of land, and Turner, the master's mate, now in charge, was evidently uneasy about her position; more than once he sent down to Mr Southcott's cabin for his Log, and 'the day's work'. What with staving off these enquiries, and uncertainty about his own fate, the master must have passed a most uneasy night.

Leaving him in suspense for a little longer, a word should be said about William Turner, the master's mate. This man's part in the mutiny is not easy to assess. Like Cronin he appears to have had no hand in the killings, but he must have been in the business from the start, for the men surrounded him in a cordial group, shaking him warmly by the hand, as soon as they invaded the quarter-deck; one of them was heard to say: 'Officer, how are you?' what time the unfortunate Lieutenant Foreshaw, a little way off, was receiving very different treatment. Later, when he sent down to enquire

<sup>1</sup> Casey was promoted lieutenant in 1799, and became a lieutenant of Greenwich Hospital in 1839. He died in 1853.

about the ship's position, he was referred to as *Captain* Turner, and in all the reports the men seem to have recognized his leadership. Like Cronin, he started as a volunteer able seaman and was promoted: melancholy confirmation perhaps of a statement made later by Mr Southcott, that 'All the best men were the principals of the mutineers'. And, again like the surgeon's mate, he seems to have avoided capture, so we know disappointingly little about him.

Dawn came at last, and with the new day a reprieve for Mr Southcott. The final scene is curious. At about 11.30 in the forenoon they brought him up on to the quarter-deck, and desired him to sit down on the gratings of the skylight; then all hands were called aft. A few of the men then spoke up and said they did not see any occasion to kill him in cold blood, and so long afterwards, and asked that if any had a mind to save his life, they should put up their hands. A great part of the ship's company did so, and Mr Southcott was spared.<sup>1</sup> The men gave three cheers, and he was ordered below and confined in the captain's cabin. The killings were over.

\* \* \* \* \*

For twelve hours now the *Hermione* had been heading south. The mutineers had worn her round as soon as they gained command of the deck, and Turner had given the necessary orders. Assuming that the first preoccupation of these men was to save their skins, the advantages of a southerly course would have been obvious. To east and west stretched the islands of the West Indies, nearly all of them at this time in British hands, with an admiral Commander-in-Chief at Jamaica, and another at Barbados. But five hundred miles to the southward lay the Spanish Empire of the mainland, and not much navigational skill would be needed to find the ports of La Guaira or Porto Cabello. Moreover, with the wind steady from the north-east, the ship would almost sail herself. So Turner and his accomplices must have argued; indeed, from the promptitude with which they put the *Hermione* round, it is possible that the decision may have been made before the mutiny began.

Details of the passage, which took nearly a week, are scanty, but it seems that some sort of order and discipline were maintained. Certain of the mutineers under Turner were appointed and esteemed as officers; there was a good deal of dancing; and although the men were continuously in liquor, drunkenness was not permitted on deck.

Captain Pigot's property, and the contents of the officers' chests, were

<sup>1</sup> Mr Southcott was to be the chief witness against many of the mutineers. He was promoted lieutenant in 1799, retired with the rank of Commander in 1830, and died in 1841.

divided among the ringleaders. The five principals had a watch each. Twenty-two others had each a piece of plate, and among these, Thomas Jay the bosun's mate claimed the silver tea-pot Captain Pigot had received from Captain Otway of the *Ceres*, as he thought he deserved it (Jay had served under Captain Pigot for three years and been flogged more than once, so perhaps he did). Twenty-three others had sixteen dollars each, and the rest of the spoil from the officers was divided among the messes in the traditional manner, with a man blindfold naming the recipient of each item as it was held up. There was a frilled shirt or a waist-coat for nearly every man.

So the *Hermione* sailed on through the warm rainsqualls and sudden blows of the hurricane season, until at last the jagged peaks of South America broke the southern horizon. But one more thing had to be done before contact could be renewed with the outer world. An oath of secrecy must be taken against that Nemesis which would stalk every one of the mutineers until his dying day.

Laurence Cronin the surgeon's mate was the man to look after this. The day before the *Hermione* arrived, all the hands were turned up on the quarter-deck, and this voluble person administered it to them on the capstan. They were never to know or discover one another, man or boy, in any part of the globe if they should meet, nor call each other by their former names, 'and this your oath and obligation, so help you God'. The disappearance of so many officers would also have to be explained, and it was agreed to say that they had been set adrift in the jolly-boat. Some swore willingly, some reluctantly, and with this final precaution the mutineers sailed boldly in and dropped anchor off the port of La Guaira.

There was no harbour there in those days, just a shallow indentation of the coastline, which formed the roadstead. The old town straggled round the bay with the mountains behind, and a wall with several batteries along the front. Very strongly defended by sea and almost inaccessible by land, such was La Guaira on the Spanish Main in the year 1797.

Turner, with Thomas Leach and John Elliot, went in under a flag of truce to arrange terms. They took the captain's barge, and before they went John Jones, late captain's steward, was required to shave them and do their hair. The barge returned next day flying Spanish colours, with a local pilot on board, and, in accordance with Turner's orders, she was received by the men on the quarter-deck with three cheers. The pilot lost no time in bringing His Majesty's late frigate to a safe anchorage under the batteries.

And at this point the characters in our story separate, and some disappear for good. The officers, with the few men who had made their position unequivocally clear from the first, were sent to Caracas, twenty miles away, as prisoners of war. They were soon exchanged, and before long arrived at



Martinique with a Spanish Cartel, and a story which shocked the Navy.<sup>1</sup>

The mutineers scattered to the four winds, but before they did so we have a few last glimpses of them. For giving up the ship, every man received twenty-five dollars from the Spaniards; there was a Spaniard at a large table in the street near the dock gate who paid them, and Turner took the money for those in the hospital. Some of the mutineers, under Spanish officers, assisted to take the *Hermione* along the coast to Porto Cabello, and worked on her in the dockyard there; and others pounded salt for their bread, or worked on the Spanish fortifications. Thomas Jay took service in one of the Spanish gun-boats at La Guaira, and was constantly in liquor. John Pearce, the only Marine among the mutineers, cheerfully heaved his regimentals overboard, and joined the Spanish train of artillery; 'I saw him in their dress!', commented Sergeant Place disgustedly. A number of men who had sided neither with nor against the mutineers would like to have gone as prisoners with the officers, but missed the opportunity through being in the hospital, or through ignorance; and for these poor wretches the future was bleak indeed. So was it, for that matter, for their more guilty shipmates.

For the mutiny in the *Hermione* made a deep impression on the Naval authorities, and no effort was spared to bring the mutineers to book. Descriptions of all the men were circulated, and rewards for their apprehension offered; advertisements were sent out by the governments of the West Indian Islands, and the liveliest interest was shown by the British public. It is hard to say how many of these guilty men were detected and hanged,<sup>2</sup> but the story of the *Hermione* is not complete without an account of how some of them were caught.

Impressment from neutral merchantmen where they were serving led to the capture of several. William Bowen, who was hanged at Portsmouth in February 1802, had sailed out of American ports for nearly five years before he was pressed at Malta by H.M.S. *Minerve* and recognized. But few had so long a run as Bowen.

Then there was John Coe, who shipped on board the French privateer *La Fleur de Mer*. The privateer captured an American brig, and Coe was one of the prize crew put on board to take her to San Domingo. On the

<sup>1</sup> By a curious chance the first news of the mutiny reached the authorities through Captain Mends of the *Diligence*. On 20 October he took a Spanish schooner whose master gave him a rather garbled account of the affair. According to the Spaniard, the *Hermione* men had been in communication with a subversive element in the *Diligence* before the mutiny, and afterwards some of them had wanted to capture her. The *Diligence* may have had a narrow escape as she only mounted 16 guns.

<sup>2</sup> Brenton, in his *Naval History*, supposes that 'nearly the whole of the crew suffered'. I have found no evidence to support such an optimistic estimate.

way they encountered H.M.S. *Aquilon*. The mutineer made a desperate attempt to escape in a boat but failed. His identity was established, and he was hanged at Port Royal in December 1798.

In September 1800 the Dutch island of Curacao surrendered to H.M.S. *Néréide*, and Henry Poulson, one of Captain Pigot's murderers, was discovered serving in a Dutch frigate. At the same time a most respectable young fellow called Johnson, clerk and cashier to the American consul, gave himself up on board the *Néréide*, as yet another of the *Hermione's* men. He brought with him a glowing testimonial from his employer, and in his account of himself he explained that he was no sailor, but had been a clerk in a commercial house at Port-au-Prince until his capture by a French privateer. He had been exchanged, but before he could regain his former employment he had been impressed into the *Hermione* as a writer, and, but for his being sick when they arrived at La Guaira, he would most certainly have given himself up as a prisoner of war. His story impressed the Court, and he was recommended to mercy.

Rather similar was the case of John Barnett, impressed by H.M.S. *Maidstone* out of the American schooner *Polly*, and then discovered to be from the *Hermione*. In his defence he said: 'Being shocked at the bloody scene . . . I endeavoured to keep out of the way, and lay down between two guns.' The Court was human, and Barnett also was recommended to mercy. Another like case was that of John Mason who, when asked why he concealed himself on the first alarm, replied: 'I was frightened and went out of the way.'

But for the majority of the mutineers there could be no mercy, and even after this interval of time one can feel nothing but satisfaction that such men as Thomas Nash and David Forrester met the fate they so richly deserved.

The ferocious Nash, described in the advertisement as being: 'of dark complexion, long black hair, remarkably hairy about the breast, arms, etc:', had shipped on board an American schooner called the *Tanner's Delight*, under the name of Nathan Robbins. But he was fond of the bottle, and when in liquor he talked. There was an occasion at Christmas time when some French privateersmen came on board the *Tanner's Delight* in San Domingo, when he was incautious enough to boast to them of the part he had played in the mutiny. And at other times, when far gone in drink, he would mention the *Hermione*, raise his clenched fist, and say: 'Bad luck to her'. A shipmate, interested in the reward of 100 dollars on every mutineer's head, informed the authorities at Charleston, and he was cast into gaol. An officer came over to identify him; the British minister applied to the American President for his delivery under the 27th Article of Jay's Treaty; and the

Commander-in-Chief at Jamaica sent over a cutter to collect him. He met his fate at Port Royal in August 1799.

David Forrester was more discreet, and survived longer. He must have been a cool hand, for he served again in the Royal Navy, as one of the captain's bargemen in H.M. sloop *Bittern*, where he is said to have behaved himself extremely well.<sup>1</sup> Under the assumed name of Thomas Williamson he must have felt that danger of apprehension was remote indeed when, on 22 March 1802, he was recognized in Point Street, Portsmouth, by John Jones, late captain's steward of the *Hermione*. Four and a half years had passed since Forrester had tapped Jones on the shoulder with the dreadful words already quoted; but the steward was quite sure of his man, and Forrester was secured and taken to the main guard-house. All doubt as to his identity was finally removed when Mr Southcott arrived hot-foot from Plymouth, with his damning testimony: 'I know the prisoner very well. He was as active in the mutiny as any I saw.' This was quite enough, but as Mr Southcott's gaze rested on the familiar features of the prisoner, recollections came flooding back, and he continued: 'He always looked on me with contempt, and appeared to be one who wanted to murder me; at least I thought so.' Of Forrester's guilt there could be no question, and he was hanged on 1 April, after making a full confession.

It is impossible to set down here all the surprising and unexpected sequels to the *Hermione* affair; how Jones the steward was abused by some seamen for giving evidence against a mutineer, and how he turned the tables on his adversaries; how a suspected mutineer was brought back in irons to England, only to escape when his ship reached Spithead; and how, years later, a repentant mutineer met old Mr Foreshaw at Liverpool, and gave him an account of his son's death. The story spins itself out over the years, and a mutineer was hanged as late as October 1806. But a word should be said about the fate of the *Hermione* herself.

For two years she flew the flag of Spain, flitting phantom-like between the islands of the Spanish Empire and the mainland, her movements, and the possibility of her recapture, fiercely discussed by every officer in the West Indies.

In September 1799 intelligence reached Sir Hyde Parker at Jamaica that she was once again in Porto Cabello, and on the point of sailing for Havana. The 28-gun frigate *Surprise* was sent to intercept her, and cruised for several weeks until, with victuals running short she beat up for Porto

<sup>1</sup> Forrester was impressed out of a privateer called the *Lydia* by H.M.S. *Bittern*, on 13 April 1799, and served in her for nearly three years before he was identified. Volume VII of the *Naval Chronicle*, which gives his alias incorrectly, quotes a number of personal statements he made after arrest.



Cabello itself, and discovered her quarry still there. The *Hermione* was moored bow and stern beneath the batteries, but her sails were bent, and she was evidently ready for sea.

For four more days the *Surprise* cruised in the offing. Then, after his dinner on the evening of the fourth day, Captain Hamilton imparted to his officers his scheme for cutting her out.

Of this famous exploit no detailed account need be given here. But the ship was boarded by the boats of the *Surprise*, her cables cut, men ran up her rigging to loosen the top-sails, the boats took her in tow, and while the fight raged on her decks she was drawn slowly out from beneath the batteries. A week later, flying British colours once more, she anchored in Port Royal.

This achievement was generally considered to have wiped out the stain of the mutiny; and, if further confirmation was needed, the ship was re-named, at first the *Retaliation*, and then, this being thought not quite suitable, the *Retribution*. In January 1802 she arrived back at Portsmouth, proceeding subsequently to Deptford, where she ended her days. For, even if it had been thought advisable to re-commission so notorious a ship, the little 32-gun frigates were becoming obsolete. So, after lying off the dockyard for three years, this ship of so many ghosts and memories was broken up in the year of Trafalgar.

#### SOURCES

Eleven volumes of Court Martial minutes in the Public Record Office provide nearly all the material. These are:

- Adm. 1/5343 for Elliot, and others.
- 1/5344 for Leach, and others.
- 1/5346 for the surviving officers, and others.
- 1/5347 for Coe.
- 1/5348 for Redmen and others.
- 1/5350 for Barnett and Nash.
- 1/5353 for Allen, Nelson, and others.
- 1/5356 for Captain Philpot of *La Prompte*.
- 1/5357 for Pearce, Johnson, and Poulson.
- 1/5360 for Miller and Forrester.
- 1/5375 for Hayes.

Of the above, Adm. 1/5343 and 5344 contain copies of the letter from Captain Mends of the *Diligence* to the Commander-in-Chief, Jamaica; Adm. 1/5348 contains a list with the names of fifty mutineers who received officers' property, and an inventory of Captain Pigot's plate.

- Adm. 51/1102. Captain's Log, H.M.S. *Success* (1794-95).
- 51/1179. Captain's Log, H.M.S. *Hermione* (1792-97).
- 36/12011. Muster Roll, H.M.S. *Hermione* (1792-97).
- 36/14524-7. Muster Roll, H.M.S. *Bittern* (1799-1802).

#### Printed Source

*Three letters of a South Carolina Planter*, by C. Pinckney (Philadelphia, 1799).

COLLINGWOOD AND GANTEAUME: THE  
FRENCH OFFENSIVE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN,  
JANUARY TO APRIL 1808

*By Piers Mackesy*

PART II

(4)

ON 8 February the *Surinam* came into Syracuse, where Lord Collingwood's squadron lay, with the news that the Rochefort squadron was at sea. She had been sent by Admiral Duckworth off Lorient as soon as he learnt of Allemand's escape, to warn the squadrons to the southward, and from Cadiz had been forwarded by Purvis to Sicily.<sup>1</sup> Duckworth himself followed with all speed in pursuit of the enemy. On 22 January he was with Cotton off the Tagus, proposing to make for Madeira, where Sir Samuel Hood, with a small expedition, was in evident danger. Thence he intended to set course across the Atlantic to San Domingo as he had done two years earlier in pursuit of Leissègues.

Meanwhile, the squadron which would have stopped Allemand had learnt that he was at large. Admiral Strachan had left his station at the end of November for a rendezvous with his victuallers. But the victualling ships had not left England at the promised date. When they appeared, gales delayed the transfer of their stores; and it was not till the day after Allemand's escape that the last of them was cleared.<sup>2</sup> On the 23rd he fell in with the *Attack* brig, sent by the frigate off Rochefort to warn him. Again the weather was against him, for westerly gales prevented him from clearing Finisterre till 1 or 2 February. On the 4th he spoke the squadron off Ferrol, and on the 9th, with seven sail of the line, he joined Purvis off Cadiz.<sup>3</sup>

Purvis had intelligence forwarded from Gibraltar a week before. An American ship had sighted six sail of the line off Cape Gata, steering east by south with all sails set. If the strange squadron had been the Spaniards from Carthage, the frigate which had been watching them would have brought the intelligence to Gibraltar. Almost certainly it was the Rochefort

<sup>1</sup> Adm. 1/414, no. 32.

<sup>2</sup> According to James; but Collingwood wrote that Strachan reached Sicily destitute of everything (*Letter-bag of Lady Stanhope*, Vol. I, p. 94).

<sup>3</sup> James, *Naval History*, Vol. IV, pp. 260-2.

squadron which had passed the Straits. Purvis urged Strachan to follow, and he made sail for the eastward. Hurrying up the Mediterranean, he joined Thornbrough at Palermo on 21 February. A frigate and sloop weighed instantly to search Toulon for the enemy.<sup>1</sup>

It was on the following day that the news reached Lord Collingwood at Syracuse, by the *Grasshopper* sloop from Gibraltar. The answer to a threat from the west was a concentration of both squadrons off the western point of Sicily, where they could intercept an enemy approaching the northern or southern coasts. Collingwood put to sea at once, summoning Thornbrough to join him off the Maretimo, where Nelson had assembled his squadron when Bruix entered the Mediterranean nine years earlier. A single seventy-four remained at Syracuse, to rally the squadron which Captain Harvey commanded off Corfu, if it should be driven in by a combination of the enemy's Adriatic frigates.<sup>2</sup>

On 2 March Strachan and Thornbrough joined Collingwood off the Maretimo, bringing his strength to fifteen sail of the line. Thornbrough brought fresh intelligence. On the 25th the *Apollo* frigate had reached Palermo with the news that the Toulon squadron was at sea. She had been blown off her station off Toulon on the 10th by a north-westerly gale, and only on her return on the 19th did she discover that the enemy had sailed on the 10th or 11th. Six days later the information was in Thornbrough's hands; but he did not yet know that the Rochefort squadron had joined Ganteaume, for Allemand had come and departed again during the *Apollo's* absence.<sup>3</sup>

All the cruisers Collingwood could scrape together were now despatched in search of information: *Apollo* to Sardinia, *Lavinia* to Leghorn, Elba, Corsica and Toulon, and *Ambuscade* to inquire at Pantellaria whether an enemy had passed to the eastward, while the *Meteor* bomb sailed for Capri, where Colonel Hudson Lowe's garrison was in close touch with the mainland.<sup>4</sup> All Collingwood could do was to wait for their reports. The enemy's probable objective was Sicily. Yet he had to bear other possibilities in mind. Evidence in captured vessels suggested that the French were intriguing in Crete and Cyprus; Alexandria, as always, was a source of anxiety; and the threat of a concentration of twenty-seven sail of the line off Cadiz could not

<sup>1</sup> Adm. 1/414, nos. 33, 34, 49.

<sup>2</sup> Adm. 1/414, no. 48.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* no. 50. James says that the *Apollo* was driven off by Allemand on the 6th, and that the information did not reach Collingwood till a month later. This suggests inefficient cruiser work, which would be of considerable significance if it were true. But Allemand went first to the Golfe Jouan, and did not appear off Toulon until the 9th at the earliest (Chevalier, *Histoire de la marine française sous le Consulat et l'Empire*, Vol. III, p. 283); and the *Apollo's* log makes it clear that Captain Fellowes had not discovered his presence when he was blown off the port.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* no. 52 (2 March); Add. MSS. 14,276, f. 80.



be ignored. On the 4th Collingwood learnt of Duckworth's intention to cross the Atlantic, leaving Purvis's squadron off Cadiz exposed to an enemy blow; and he resolved to go down the Mediterranean to support him the moment he could be sure the enemy was not coming his way, leaving Thornbrough to cover Sicily.<sup>1</sup> One danger at least had passed. On the 25th a troop-convoy was off Sardinia, protected only by a couple of frigates; but on 1 March the transports reached Palermo unharmed, bringing Sherbrooke a welcome reinforcement of some five thousand men.<sup>2</sup>

Collingwood's dispositions were complete. His cruisers searched for the enemy, and his battle squadron was ready to intercept them if they attacked Sicily or attempted to pass to the east. But the fleet off the Maretime had been assembled in vain; for the French had already passed the Sicilian narrows. But fortune had not smiled on them. Ganteaume had put to sea on 10 February. Allemand, who had passed the Straits of Gibraltar unobserved in darkness and storm, was waiting off Toulon; and ten sail of the line with two transports steered southwards through high seas into the night, with the north-wester growing more violent behind them.<sup>3</sup> But 'these gentlemen', as Nelson had once observed, 'are not accustomed to a Gulf of Lyons gale'. At daybreak the fleet was scattered across the tumbling waters. Rear-Admiral Cosmao, in the *Robuste*, saw only one sail in sight, which turned out to be the *Génois*. Two days later he fell in with the *Annibal*, assisting a rudderless transport. Twice the tow-ropes parted, and after losing an entire twenty-four hours, Cosmao abandoned the transport to run before the wind for the shelter of the Barbary coast.<sup>4</sup> The loss was serious. Of the three transports which had been loaded for Corfu, one had never left Toulon; the second was now crippled and abandoned; and only the *Var* remained.

Sighting Cape Bon on the 15th, Cosmao ran down the coast of Africa, keeping clear of Malta, and reached the rendezvous off Cape Santa Maria di Leuca at the mouth of the Adriatic on the 19th. Out of the fog appeared another ship of the line and two sloops. Two days later the transport *Var* rejoined, though one of the sloops had vanished in the night. Cosmao's force was a respectable one. The British squadron watching Corfu consisted of a single sixty-four and a few cruisers. With his four of the line, Cosmao could have raised the blockade, discharged the transport, and opened the

1 Adm. 1/414, no. 53.

2 This was part of a reinforcement from England which had been scattered during the voyage. When General Dalrymple, the governor of Gibraltar, learnt that Allemand had passed the Straits, he instantly forwarded the transports to Sicily (Adm. 1/414, no. 136).

3 Ganteaume's ships of the line were: from Rochefort, *Majestueux*, 120 (flag), *Ajax*, *Suffren*, *Lion*, *Magnanime*, all eighties; from Toulon, *Commerce-de-Paris*, 110 (flag), *Robuste*, 82 (Rear-Admiral Cosmao-Dumanoir), *Génois*, *Annibal*, *Borée*, eighties.

4 *Joseph Corr.* Vol. iv, pp. 187-8 (25 February, Cosmao to Saliceti).

passage from southern Italy. But he hesitated. His orders forbade him to approach Corfu independently; yet his ships had been sighted by the enemy, and he feared to remain on the rendezvous in the open sea. After three days without news of Ganteaume, he called a conference of his captains, who advised him to seek the safety of Taranto. On the 25th the squadron lay under the batteries of the port.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, when Ganteaume searched the rendezvous a few days later, there was no trace of the missing vessels. Had he sailed straight for Cape Santa Maria when he reached the Adriatic, he would have found Cosmao; instead he had put in to Corfu. His own flagship, dismasted on the voyage, remained in harbour for repairs; but even without her, Ganteaume still had five of the line and two frigates, enough to open communications with Italy. Summoning the waiting transports from Taranto, Otranto, Gallipoli and Brindisi, he sailed from Corfu to search for Cosmao on the rendezvous, at the moment when Cosmao was entering Taranto.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, Cosmao was in perplexity. Time was precious, yet he hesitated to act. Two idle years in harbour had left their mark on his seamen. The crew's lack of experience matched their dislike of the service; and only the lash had kept the *Robuste's* complement at work through the storms which the squadron had endured. Napoleon's domineering attitude towards the service was also claiming its toll. In the absence of orders, Cosmao dared not expose his squadron to the risk of destruction by a superior enemy. To shift the responsibility from himself, he appealed for instructions to the Minister of War at Naples. While Ganteaume was sweeping the Adriatic for the missing ships, nearly half his force, and the transport laden with the vital munitions for Corfu, lay idle in the harbour of Taranto.<sup>3</sup>

Nor was King Joseph willing to assume the burden which Cosmao had declined. The courier with Cosmao's appeal struggled through the snow-blocked Apennine passes to reach Naples on 2 March. Joseph's first thought was that Ganteaume might have joined Cosmao and saved him the necessity of making a decision.<sup>4</sup> But further consideration showed him that this hope was not an adequate excuse for doing nothing. He had no authority to give Cosmao orders, as he explained to Napoleon, and the present circumstances had not been provided for in any of the Emperor's letters. But since, for the moment, the British might be fully occupied in blockading Ganteaume somewhere, he would advise Cosmao to execute the squadron's mission without delay. But the unhappy King realized that he might be sending the squadron to destruction.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. iv, pp. 189-90.

<sup>3</sup> *Joseph Corr.* Vol. iv, p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. iv, p. 204; Chevalier, Vol. III, p. 284.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 186.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 192-3.

Ganteaume's letter announcing his arrival at Corfu had been delayed by the violent storms which lashed the Adriatic. Cosmao despatched a second appeal to Naples, assuring the King that he would consider any instructions from Joseph as emanating from the Emperor himself.<sup>1</sup> But on 8 March, fortified either by Joseph's advice or by news of Ganteaume, he took the resolution to weigh for Corfu, where he arrived on the 12th. The next day Ganteaume returned to the island, and after three anxious weeks the fleet was at last united.<sup>2</sup>

## (5)

It was fortunate for Ganteaume that while he groped for his missing ships in the mouth of the Adriatic, losing the precious days on which his safety depended, the British command had been equally the victims of uncertainty. The same doubts and despair which had twice tormented Nelson in his pursuit of Brueys and Villeneuve were preying on Collingwood; but there was one great difference in their situations. Nelson had had no base in the Mediterranean in 1798, and in 1805 had relied for his supplies on the benevolence of the Court of Naples, protected by its neutrality: he had been free to take his fleet all over the Mediterranean in his frantic search, using ships of the line to seek the information which his dearth of cruisers denied him. But Collingwood was tied to Sicily. 'It has always appeared to me,' he had written a week before he learnt that the Rochefort squadron was in the Mediterranean, 'that notwithstanding the representations which have been made by the generals and myself, the Ministers in England were unconscious of the real state of this island, and the necessity of having in it a prevailing force.'<sup>3</sup> The French preparations in Calabria left little doubt that it was their most probable as well as their most important objective; and until he knew where all the enemy squadrons lay, he could not expose his insecure base by a distant search. It was the problem which had haunted Saint Vincent and Keith in their search for Bruix.

The uncertainty continued. The merchantmen from which the navy had formerly drawn so much of its information had been swept from the seas; and Collingwood's frigates were too few and too battered to supply the deficiency.<sup>4</sup> Rumour and conjecture were his only resources, and both pointed to Sicily. Even the scattering of Ganteaume's ships contributed

1 *Ibid.* pp. 198-9.

2 *Ibid.* Vol. iv, p. 217; Chevalier, Vol. III, p. 284.

3 Add. MSS. 14,278, f. 47 (13 February to Thornbrough).

4 *Collingwood Corr.* pp. 351, 355; Hoste, *Service Afloat*, p. 127; Adm. 1/414, no. 65. For Collingwood's complaints of lack of frigates see *Collingwood Corr.* p. 355; Adm. 1/414, nos. 9, 157. See also Appendix for distribution of the fleet.



ironically to their safety by increasing the fog which surrounded Collingwood. On 6 March a frigate came in from Pantellaria with intelligence of a numerous fleet which had passed to the eastward in a storm three weeks earlier; but on the same day Collingwood learnt that Captain Harvey's squadron off Corfu had been chased by four of the line and a frigate outside the Adriatic on the 20th. Harvey himself thought they might be the Russians from Trieste; but in the light of recent information from Trieste and of the report from Pantellaria, Collingwood believed them to be Frenchmen. But six French ships of the line were not accounted for; and so improbable did it seem that the enemy would bring his whole force to the eastward only to divide it that he concluded that only four of the line had passed Pantellaria.<sup>1</sup> Preparations were being made at Naples to receive a fleet, and from Tunis a French squadron was reported at Elba. Thus the naval threat to Sicily seemed to be a double one, from both Naples and the Adriatic. Between two enemy forces, of uncertain strength and both possibly embarking troops, Collingwood could not send any important detachment of his fleet far from the long and vulnerable Sicilian coastline. Before he could sail for the Adriatic, he must ensure that there was not a more immediate threat from Naples. Leaving a force at Palermo, he sailed about 10 March to search the Bay of Naples for an enemy squadron.<sup>2</sup>

There were no French ships at Naples; but out in the Bay at Capri Hudson Lowe had learnt that an enemy squadron was in Taranto, preparing an expedition against Sicily.<sup>3</sup> Stationing four ships of the line under Martin at Palermo, Collingwood rounded the west of Sicily to reconnoitre Taranto. The fleet put in to Syracuse on the way, and there, on 21 March, Collingwood received intelligence from Captain Harvey which at last cleared his doubts: both the enemy squadrons were to the eastward.<sup>4</sup> Summoning Admiral Martin to join him with two of the ships at Palermo,

1 Adm. 1/414, no. 57 (6 March, Collingwood to Pole). Captain Harvey had actually put in to Syracuse on 24 February, shortly after Collingwood sailed for the Maretimo. Sir Charles Laughton, in his article on Collingwood in the *Dict. Nat. Biogr.*, blames him for not getting in touch with Harvey, and implies that if he had done so at once he would have learnt the whereabouts of the enemy and would have brought them to action. But Harvey's report was so inconclusive that it could have made little difference when Collingwood received it, until he received the intelligence from Pantellaria. The report is to be found in Add. MSS. 14,277, f. 106. As late as 16 March a cruiser report from the Adriatic referred to the enemy as Russians (Add. MSS. 14,277, f. 111).

2 *Collingwood Corr.* pp. 350-1; Add. MSS. 14,276, f. 81.

3 Adm. 1/414, no. 65.

4 Harvey wrote that a three-decker had joined the enemy; and Collingwood wrote to Martin that 'there remains no doubt, but that it is the French squadron from Rochefort. . . the whole of their force is to the Eastward of Sicily.' But since he knew that there was a three-decker in the Toulon squadron, it is not easy to see why he should have assumed the presence of both the Rochefort and Toulon squadrons, unless he already knew of another three-decker with the enemy.

he hastened towards the Adriatic,<sup>1</sup> hugging the coastline of Italy, which was the course on which he would intercept a fleet of small transports on their way to Sicily. On the 23rd, expecting at every hour to meet the enemy, he issued his famous fighting instruction to the fleet.<sup>2</sup> A few days later he was off Cape Rizzuto, near the mouth of the Gulf of Taranto.

Here, on the 28th, the *Unité* frigate joined from the Upper Adriatic, with intelligence that a French squadron of eight or nine sail of the line had left Corfu about ten days earlier with an easterly wind. The impression the news conveyed was that they had gone to Taranto to join the expedition preparing there, and now lay inside the Gulf at his mercy.<sup>3</sup> The long search seemed to be nearing its end. In a few hours or days the French Mediterranean fleet might be locked in a harbour nearer to the British base and on a more sheltered coast than Toulon; or if Ganteaume made the mistake of Brueys, and lay in an unprotected anchorage, or like Villeneuve was forced to put to sea by the Emperor, a second Nile or Trafalgar might end his career.

But before he closed with the enemy, Collingwood was called on to provide for another quarter. The day before the *Unité* joined the fleet, he had learnt that the Carthagera squadron commanded by Admiral Valdès had sailed for Majorca almost at the moment when Ganteaume quitted Toulon. Even in this campaign, dominated by the difficulty of obtaining information, the series of mischances which delayed for six weeks Collingwood's reception of the news were extraordinary. When the Spaniards sailed, the only cruiser off Carthagera seems to have been the *Hydra* frigate; for her consort was the *Grasshopper*, and it will be remembered that she was the vessel despatched from Gibraltar to warn Collingwood that Allemand was in the Mediterranean. The *Hydra* had followed the enemy northwards; and it was not till 23 February that Admiral Purvis, commanding the Lower Mediterranean, learnt on his blockading station off Cadiz by an American schooner that the Spaniards were at sea. His immediate thought was that they would try to join the fleet in Cadiz, for in obedience to the Emperor's orders, the Combined Squadron was ready for sea, and had been lying at single anchor for days at a time. He brought the blockading squadron close inshore to prevent them. Meanwhile, the *Hydra* had left the Spaniards at anchor in Palma Bay, and Captain Mundy brought his intelligence, not to Sicily, but to his own superior officer off Cadiz, whence it was at last forwarded to Collingwood.<sup>4</sup>

For Collingwood the tidings seemed to revive the double threat to Sicily, a French one from Taranto, a Spanish one from Naples. Admiral Martin's orders to join the fleet were cancelled, and an additional ship of the

1 Add. MSS. 14,278, f. 59.

2 *Collingwood Corr.* pp. 359-62.

3 Adm. 1/414, no. 65.

4 Adm. 1/414, nos. 33, 45, 51.

line was sent to him, forming a squadron of five of the line at Palermo, with one at Messina: a force sufficient to defeat the six Spaniards while the main fleet dealt with the French.<sup>1</sup> Satisfied that Sicily was once more secured from the west, Collingwood pushed forward the *Apollo* frigate and *Herald* sloop to search Taranto for the French. Should they draw a blank, the Admiral's intention was to go to the entrance of the Archipelago, whither the *Saracen* sloop had been despatched in the vain quest for information.<sup>2</sup> Off Naples a fortnight earlier, he had heard a rumour that the Turkish navy, nominally at war with Britain since Duckworth's expedition up the Dardanelles, was to join the French and Russians; and while he suspected that the report, like a similar one of preparations to invade Sardinia, was a device to distract his attention from Sicily, the eastern Mediterranean and Alexandria remained a constant anxiety.<sup>3</sup>

## (6)

Once again the trap had been set after the enemy had gone. The information from Capri which brought Collingwood to the Ionian Sea came too late. On the very day when Hudson Lowe had communicated his intelligence of a fleet in Taranto, Ganteaume had received a letter from Joseph which deranged all his plans.

Not till 10 March had Joseph learnt of Ganteaume's arrival at Corfu. Without delay he despatched a warning that Admiral Strachan's squadron from the Atlantic had joined Collingwood. Though he added an assurance that his troops were ready on the Straits, in reality he now despaired of success. 'Aujourd'hui', he had written to Napoleon, 'je regarde l'expédition de Sicile comme manquée; l'ennemi y réunit tous les jours de tels moyens maritimes, que, quels que soient mes désirs, je n'ose plus espérer de les voir exaucés.' Collingwood's determination, in his ignorance of the enemy's movements, that in no circumstances must Sicily be exposed, had had its effect. Joseph could see only one hope. If Ganteaume allowed himself to be blockaded in Taranto, and twelve thousand troops could be assembled there, a favourable wind might enable him to slip away and land the army south of Messina. On the 11th Joseph actually ordered a force of six thousand men forward to Castrovillari, a road-junction in the Basilicata from which they could march on Taranto or Reggio as circumstances might dictate.<sup>4</sup>

But Ganteaume had no intention of allowing his fleet to be trapped and subsequently exposed to destruction for the sake of completing Joseph's kingdom. He had been preparing to unload his solitary transport at Corfu,

1 Add. MSS. 14,278, f. 62.

3 *Collingwood Corr.* p. 350.

2 Adm. 1/414, no. 65.

4 *Joseph Corr.* Vol. IV, pp. 201, 202, 204.



and had promised to supply the deficiencies caused by the absence of his other transports with powder and flour from the warships. But on learning of the overwhelming force which was assembling off Sicily, he informed the military governor that he could not delay his departure for an instant. He retained the warships' stores in case he should be blockaded and need them; and abandoning the transport *Var* to discharge its cargo, he made sail for France. His course brought him to the east and southward of the approaching British fleet, and on 10 April he anchored safely in Toulon.<sup>1</sup>

Thus it was that the *Apollo* found no enemy in Taranto. She rejoined on 30 March, and on the following day a frigate from the west appeared with intelligence from General Dalrymple at Gibraltar that the enemy fleets were to concentrate near Tunis.<sup>2</sup> Again the whole threat to Sicily seemed to come from the westward; and Collingwood hastened back to the Maretimo, where on 4 April he received the first certain intelligence of the enemy. The *Weazle* sloop had fallen in with the whole of the French fleet on the Tunisian coast; and following it northwards, had left it on the 2nd off the southern end of Sardinia on a westerly course.<sup>3</sup> The Spanish squadron had been reported in Mahon on 22 March, and it now seemed that Minorca rather than Tunis was the enemy rendezvous. From all quarters came information that their object was Sicily. Confident that he would soon meet them there, Collingwood assembled his forces off the Maretimo. Twelve of the line already with him, and two more summoned from Palermo, would annihilate the sixteen enemy if they could be brought to battle. A chain of cruisers was stretched from Cape Bon to the Maretimo, and thence to Cape Carbonara in Sardinia, to watch the passages to the north and south; and two frigates lay in Palermo to bring swift intelligence to the fleet.<sup>4</sup>

But the anxious weeks were nearing their end. Resolving not to await the enemy now that he knew in what quarter his squadrons were concentrated, Collingwood sailed for Port Mahon in the hope of catching both the French and Spanish fleets. But on 14 April his frigates found only the Spaniards, apparently unready for sea. Their presence in Minorca might be yet another deception, and the French object still Sicily.<sup>5</sup> Leaving a pair of cruisers to watch Port Mahon, and despatching the *Amphion* frigate to search Toulon and the Italian ports, he returned to his old station off the Maretimo, whence Thornbrough took seven ships into Palermo to replenish

1 *Ibid.* Vol. iv, pp. 214-16; Chevalier, Vol. III, p. 284. The *Var* was captured off Corfu in 1809 by the *Belle-Poule* and taken into the British service as a store-ship.

2 Adm. 1/414, no. 67; Add. MSS. 14,278, f. 64.

3 Adm. 1/414, no. 67; Adm. 51/1892 (Captain's log of *Weazle*). The *Weazle* sent her cutter in to Palermo on the 3rd with despatches for Martin, and on the 4th met Collingwood at sea.

4 *Collingwood Corr.* pp. 351-2; Adm. 1/414, nos. 67, 79; Add. MSS. 14,276, f. 85.

5 Adm. 1/414, nos. 79, 82; Add. MSS. 14,276, f. 88.

their provisions.<sup>1</sup> On the 25th, *Amphion* rejoined him: two days earlier Captain Hoste had seen the French fleet at anchor in Toulon.<sup>2</sup>

Hoste returned instantly to command a cruiser force off the port, Collingwood following as soon as the battle-fleet had been replenished. Early in May the main fleet was off Toulon. Martin with four sail of the line lay concealed off Minorca, waiting for the moment when lack of supplies would force the Spaniards to leave Port Mahon.<sup>3</sup> The long pursuit was over, and the Mediterranean command had settled down to its familiar waiting routine.

(7)

What was the outcome of the campaign? First, perhaps, the preservation of the French fleet, whose safe return to Toulon meant that Britain would be burdened with a force of twenty or thirty ships of the line in the Mediterranean for the rest of the war. Collingwood had been robbed of the immortality of Jervis and Nelson. His disappointment was bitter, and the main cause of his misfortune was want of information. There was scarcely a neutral upon the seas; and for lack of the frigates for which he had appealed to replace the vanished merchantmen, the enemy could not be found. Lacking definite information, Collingwood was forced to cover Sicily, the most important and the most probable enemy objective; for the garrison alone was too weak to secure the great island against invasion.<sup>3</sup>

Yet what had Napoleon's long-sought combination achieved? Ganteaume had not saved Corfu; for not only was it not in danger of invasion, but it had already been provisioned when he appeared. In January and February sailings had been resumed from southern Italy; and though the losses were heavy, a year's supply of corn got through.<sup>4</sup> Powder and munitions were the difficulty, for the army of Naples devoured Joseph's resources; but Ganteaume's supplies did little to meet the deficiency. The *Var's* cargo was small compared with the stocks already in the island. The flour was a negligible addition to the great quantity already accumulated, the powder a mere tenth of the stock in the island's magazines. The gun-carriages, mortars, and engineers' tools were useful, but could have been sent with less risk overland through Italy. The provisioning was not on a heroic scale. Neither the object nor the results of Ganteaume's voyage were proportioned to its

1 Adm. 1/414, no. 82; Add. MSS. 14,276, f. 88.

2 Hoste, *Service Afloat*, p. 127; Adm. 1/414, no. 90.

3 For the problem of the vanished neutrals, see Adm. 1/414, no. 65; *Collingwood Corr.* p. 355; Hoste, *Service Afloat*, p. 127. For the frigate question, *Collingwood Corr.* p. 355; Adm. 1/414, nos. 9, 57.

4 *Joseph Corr.* Vol. iv, pp. 103, 105-6, 120, 152-3, 164, 184-5, 218.

danger. Napoleon's comment summarized the results: 'Ja n'ai rien perdu, et j'ai fait naviguer mon escadre, ce qui forme d'autant mes matelots.'<sup>1</sup> As a training cruise, the expedition had been a success.

Thus the maritime stroke which followed the pacification of the continent at Tilsit was expended in securing one of the prizes of the peace. The plan to dislodge the British from the Mediterranean was postponed in order to reinsure against a convulsion of the Ottoman Empire, and Sicily remained in the hands of Napoleon's enemies. Half of the Mediterranean plan was attempted in the following summer, when he invaded Spain. Yet even if Spain and Gibraltar had fallen, the Royal Navy could still have remained in the Mediterranean as long as Sicily was held, harrying the trade of the continent from Malaga to Cattaro, covering the flow of commerce between Britain and the Levant, protecting Turkey and threatening the French hold over Italy. Such were the advantages which Napoleon abandoned to his enemy.

1 Napoleon Corr. 13763.

## APPENDIX

### *Distribution of the Mediterranean Fleet—8 March 1808<sup>1</sup>*

#### *Ships of the line*

With Collingwood	3
With Thornbrough and Strachan	12
Off Corfu	2
At Messina	1
With Purvis (Cadiz)	12
Total	30

#### *Frigates etc (40-20 guns)*

Reconnoitring for the enemy	4
Off Corfu	2
Upper Adriatic	2
With Collingwood	1
With Purvis (Cadiz and Straits)	2
Off Sardinia	1
Blockade of Turkey	3
Watching Carthage	1
To Malta to complete	1
Total	17

1 Adm. 1/414, no. 58.



*Sloops and Brigs*

At Messina		3
Between Naples and Messina		2
Adriatic		1
Off Sardinia (Straits of Bonifacio)		1
Blockade of Turkey (Archipelago, Egypt, Rhodes)		3
N.W. of Cape Spartel	2	} Purvis
Off Cape St Mary (Cadiz)	1	
Off Cadiz lighthouse	1	
Completing at Gibraltar		1
Refitting at Malta		3
Dispatches and orders		1
Total		19

*Bomb-vessels*

To Capri for intelligence ( <i>Lucifer</i> )		1
Receiving ship at Malta ( <i>Meteor</i> )		1
Total		2

*Miscellaneous*

Gun-brigs for service of Malta		2
Gun-brigs for service of Gibraltar		2
Armed Defence Ship at Syracuse		1
Armed Defence Ships supplying Cadiz squadron		2
San Juan hulk, receiving ship at Gibraltar		1
Total		8

*Grand total in Mediterranean Command*

## ABERYSTWYTH FISHING BOATS

By R. J. H. Lloyd

## INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL

FOR many centuries fishing, and particularly herring fishing, was the main maritime occupation of Aberystwyth. It was referred to as early as 1206 when it was recorded that 'in that year there came to the estuary of the Ystwyth such an abundance of fish that their like was never heard of'<sup>1</sup>. A century later, in 1302, there were between twenty and thirty legal actions connected with the fishery, which shows that the industry was well established at that time. Some of the cases had to do with the evasion of market tolls by selling herrings on the sands below high-water mark, while others arose because some of the fishermen appear to have taken part in the fishing without obtaining proper licences for their boats.<sup>2</sup>

'By the middle of the 14th century there were more than twenty fishing boats employed',<sup>2</sup> and although sea fishing was free in most places 'at Aberystwyth a meise of herrings (*the prise-mes*) was demanded of each herring boat landing'.<sup>3</sup> At one time the *prise-mes* was rendered to the Pryce family who leased the Crown right. 'The original arrangement was to render five score of herrings for the privilege' of landing or selling fish in the town, but afterwards this was 'commuted into an annual payment of £1. 10s. 0d.'. Eventually the lease was taken over by the Nanteos estate which appears to have retained it until well into the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

In the sixteenth century Aberystwyth was described as a 'havon and landinge place. . . being a bard havon',<sup>5</sup> and fishing continued to be the main, if not the only, maritime occupation, for none of the creeks or harbours of Cardigan Bay owned any shipping except small fishing boats of 4 or 5 tons burthen with a crew of six or seven fishermen 'during fysshinge tyme'.<sup>5</sup> Fishing requisites such as salt, herring nets, etc., were obtained mainly from Ireland and Milford, but towards the end of the sixteenth century the salt was bought increasingly from Liverpool and Cheshire.<sup>5</sup>

The survival of an interesting custom is mentioned in connexion with a lawsuit in 1685, between the vicar of Llanbadarn Fawr and the fishing community, in which the vicar claimed a tithe of every tenth herring caught and landed on the beach at Aberystwyth. During the case it was stated that at one time it had been the custom of the incumbent of St Mary's Church to come to the beach and offer up prayers before the boats set out for the

fishing; when they returned he would appear again, this time carrying a basket into which they would put a few herrings 'in recognition of his services' and 'out of goodness of heart'.<sup>2</sup>

During the eighteenth century there was a marked increase in maritime activity in Cardigan Bay. Many small trading vessels were built locally and employed in the coastal trade, particularly the oak bark trade with Ireland, and during the herring fishing or when cargoes were scarce, some of these were employed in fishing. Herring appear to have been plentiful in 1745 and during that season forty-seven boats of about 12 tons each took between them 2160 meise of herrings in one night. Three years later fifty-nine sloops were employed out of Aberystwyth during the herring fishing<sup>6</sup> and probably many of these were small trading vessels. The practice of using these trading vessels for fishing when circumstances were favourable continued far into the nineteenth century. Not only were they employed in the herring season, but also at other times of the year when they must have been trawling or line fishing. For instance, between 1851 and 1856 the smacks *Albert* (16 tons) and *Barnetta* (18 tons) appear to have been fishing out of Aberystwyth every year between April and September or November, and in 1854 they were joined by the schooner *Taliesin* (40 tons).<sup>7</sup>

With the increase in trade during the eighteenth century, Aberystwyth began to rise in size and importance. Up to 1757 it was a creek under Aberdovey, but by 1762 the Custom House had been moved to Aberystwyth, which came directly under the head port of Milford.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately the inadequate harbour was a serious handicap to further development. In 1780 it was described 'as being in great danger of being lost or destroyed'<sup>8</sup> and the inhabitants obtained an Act of Parliament to 'repair, enlarge and preserve their port'.

The harbour was formed by the estuary of the River Rheidol before it was joined by the River Ystwyth, and was protected on the seaward side by a shingle spit called the *Rô-fawr*, which extended southward from the Castle for 500 yards towards the mouth of the river.<sup>8</sup> The bar frequently became choked, and then it was impossible for even the smallest vessel to leave or enter the harbour until heavy rainfall inland brought down sufficient flood water to clear the entrance.<sup>6</sup>

About 1800 some work was done on the north side of the river, and an attempt made to build a stone pier on a ridge of rock called the *Wûg* towards the north side of the town, but both were destroyed before 1806. In the meantime the River Ystwyth had been 'diverted from its original outfall and turned into the Rheidol to act more efficiently with that river in scouring the bar', and in 1836 further improvements were commenced at a cost of about £15,000.<sup>8</sup> It was not until after 1850 that the work was



completed, and the entrance was protected by a stone pier from the south, and the *Rô-fawr*, on which a good quay wall had been built, from the north. Through the entrance between these two breakwaters both rivers flowed into the sea.

In spite of these improvements one real need remained unsatisfied. There was still no harbour or refuge in Cardigan Bay into which vessels could run for shelter at all states of the tide, and throughout the nineteenth century this was the main reason advanced for the failure of the fishing industry to become well established. It was pointed out that 'as a trawling boat and fittings cost from £400 to £500 few people who could afford this sum are willing, under existing circumstances, to invest it in a hazardous undertaking'.<sup>9</sup>

In 1843 the railway was extended to Aberystwyth and greatly helped the development of the port and town; and three years later a Treasury warrant extended the limits of the port to include all creeks and harbours from Newquay to the south bank of the River Dysynni beyond Towyn in Merioneth.<sup>8</sup>

The facilities at the port during the early part of the nineteenth century were considerable, and in 1816 there were two shipbuilders, Thomas Williams and John Owen, as well as a sailmaker, two rope makers, blacksmiths, sawyers and carpenters; while by 1851 an oar and block maker and an anchor and cable smith could be added to this list.

In spite of an Act of Parliament in 1787, which granted a bounty on every barrel of herrings taken by open and half-decked boats, there appears to have been little increase in the size of the fishing industry at Aberystwyth up to about 1820. In fact, in 1803 the herring fishing was said to have declined,<sup>2</sup> while in 1816, out of a list of 343 householders and tradesmen living at Aberystwyth, only one is described as a fisherman; though some of the fifty-two mariners and thirty-seven tradesmen employed in the ship-building and repairing industry were almost certainly part-time fishermen, and many of the other inhabitants may have been also. Another possibility is that many women took an active part in the industry at that time, as they did at Milford Haven at the end of the century and at Cwm yr Eglwys in Pembrokeshire where a small fishery was operated entirely by women in the 1870's.<sup>9</sup> It was said at the time 'that the little encouragement given to fishermen and the badness of the harbour render them careless of procuring such means of supply, tho' immediately within their reach, except in summer months, when it is less irksome... and the town becomes more thronged with lodgers'.<sup>10</sup>

The type of fishing boat in use at Aberystwyth in the 1820's is shown in a contemporary drawing<sup>11</sup> to have been a heavy clinker-built boat, open

except for a small fore deck, and cutter rigged. A beam trawl was used and is shown in the drawing, but it is probably safe to assume that in the herring season this was discarded in favour of the drift net.

In 1831 the shoals of herring were more plentiful than for years previously; and although they decreased again later,<sup>2</sup> the fishing industry slowly expanded, and by 1863 there was a considerable fishery in Cardigan Bay in which many Liverpool and Hoylake boats participated.

In accordance with Part II of the Sea Fisheries Act of 1868 all fishing craft were registered and given letters and numbers, which had to be painted on hull and sail. For registration purposes they were grouped into three classes: 1st-class boats were those of 15 tons or more, 2nd-class were under 15 tons and navigated otherwise than with oars, while 3rd-class boats were navigated by oars only. A good deal of scope to vary the classification was given to the officer making the registration, and at Aberystwyth the officer played safe and classified almost everything 3rd class, though many of the boats registered in the 1870's under this classification appear from their brief description to warrant promotion to 2nd class.

There were eighty-three boats registered at Aberystwyth in 1872, and of these two were 1st-class and six were 2nd-class boats.<sup>12</sup> Many of them did not belong to Aberystwyth, but came from other places within the limits of the port, such as Newquay, Aberayron, Borth and Aberdovey.

In 1883 Aberystwyth was described as 'the most considerable fishing station in Cardigan Bay', and seventy-seven fishing craft were registered at the port; nine were 2nd-class boats totalling 60 tons and the remaining sixty-eight were 3rd-class boats totalling 258 tons. The local boats were far outnumbered by the trawlers that came from the English fishing stations, chiefly Fleetwood, Liverpool and Hoylake. These vessels were generally much larger than the Welsh trawlers and were of between 30 and 40 tons, and fifteen to twenty of them could often be seen anchored off Aberystwyth. They used a beam trawl with a long beam that ranged from 25 to 45 ft. according to the size of the trawler, and the mesh of the net was between  $2\frac{1}{2}$  and 3 in.<sup>9</sup> Sometimes the fleet was joined by Brixham boats which used a beam comparatively much shorter than the north-west coast trawlers, whose example the Welshmen generally followed.

The total number of fishing boats registered at Aberystwyth between 1871 and 1899 that actually belonged to the place, was seventy, and of these nine were 1st-class and nine 2nd-class trawlers, while the remaining fifty-two were small herring drifters and line fishers, almost all open or half-decked boats and mostly with a keel between 20 and 25 ft long. Only seven were less than 20 ft. and three over 30 ft. The description of their rig in the Register of Fishing Boats is inconsistent and most misleading, and it has

not been possible to reach any very reliable conclusions from this source.<sup>13</sup> When not engaged in fishing many of the smaller boats were used for carrying passengers during the holiday season, and operated off the beach for this purpose in increasing numbers towards the end of the century.

At this time the fishery was still fairly active, but as the present century advanced the fishing declined and by 1928 only one motorized trawler was fishing regularly out of Aberystwyth, while six small motor-boats and three rowing boats were engaged in herring and whiting fishing.<sup>2</sup>

At the present time there are still a few fishing boats belonging to the port, mostly small motor-boats that are used for week-end fishing during the summer, and none of them engaged in the herring fishing in 1953.

### HERRING FISHING

The herring fishing commenced early in September and continued until late November or December. Many of the old fishermen believed that the fish travelled from south to north, and it is possible that at this point on the coast they did travel northwards for a short distance as they moved into the northern bight of Cardigan Bay. But whatever the truth of this, the fishermen 'went wherever the fish were', south to Newquay or up the coast to Borth, Barmouth and Portmadoc, or sometimes only a mile or two off Aberystwyth.

The drift nets used in the open and half-decked boats were 30 yards long, about 4 fathoms deep and had a  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in. mesh. The top of the net was attached to a line called the *upper tant* which was suspended below the buoy rope by lines, perhaps  $2\frac{1}{2}$  fathoms long, but varying according to the depth at which they expected to find the fish. Along this rope, and spaced at about 1 fathom intervals, were the cork floats. The foot of the net was secured to the *lower tant* and stones were sewn in at intervals to act as weights to keep the net upright in the water.

The larger boats carried fifteen to twenty-five nets each, while the smaller gigs and double-ended beach boats only carried between six and eight nets. During the season fifteen to twenty boats, or more, would sail in company to the fishing grounds in time to shoot their nets at sunset. After a boat had lain to her nets for an hour or so, the first net was brought inboard, and if the catch seemed satisfactory all the nets were hauled aboard and fish and nets were dumped in the bottom of the boat. The boats were so small and the working space so restricted that no attempt was made to take the fish out of the nets until the boats had returned to port. This meant that the nets could only be shot once on each trip.

Whether the boats landed their catch on the beach or entered the harbour



depended on the state of the tide, but in either case the buyers were there to meet them. Most of the fish were sent to Liverpool by rail, but some fishermen sold part of their catch locally, and, until very recent times, were to be seen with their fish barrows in the town, along the sea front or down by the harbour.

At Aberystwyth 126 herrings went to the *long hundred* and 5 *long hundred* to the *meise*, while farther north a *long hundred* was only 123 fish. Catches varied a great deal from year to year, but in a good season it was not unusual for one of the three-masted open boats to land 100 *meise* after a good night's fishing. Sometimes catches were exceptionally heavy, and it is said that about 50 years ago, an open boat fishing up in Portmadoc bay took a great quantity of herrings and in consequence was so heavily laden that the 'oars floated out of the rowlocks'. It had to leave five nets at the bottom of the bay and only just managed to struggle into Pwllheli.

### HERRING BOATS

Apart from four or five small trawlers that may have engaged in the herring fishing during the season, the boats were all open or half-decked, and could be divided roughly into four types: (1) the Morecambe Bay type cutters that were characteristic of the whole of Cardigan Bay and the North Wales coast; (2) open boats with a three-masted rig; (3) gigs of various sizes and diverse rigs; and (4) at the turn of the century, the small double-ended beach boats of which there are three or four examples still to be seen.

(1) *The Morecambe Bay or North West Coast Type*: A drawing by E. Prys Owen, c. 1820,<sup>11</sup> shows a type of boat used at Aberystwyth during the earlier part of the nineteenth century. It had a heavy clinker-built hull, perhaps 25 to 28 ft. long, rather bluff bows, full beam and a transom stern. It was an open boat, apart from a small fore-deck, and had no thwarts, but a heavy transverse beam was placed a few feet aft of the midship section, dividing the main working space into two parts of about equal size.

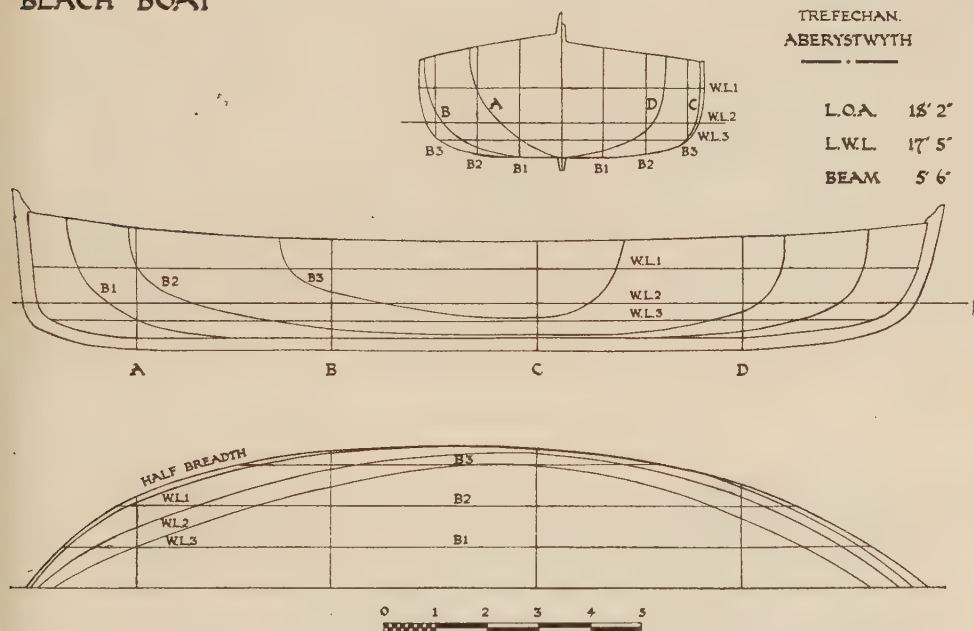
It was cutter rigged, with jib, stays'l, mains'l, and probably a lug-headed tops'l, and had a very long bowsprit and a boom that extended well beyond the transom. The mast was stepped against the aft end of the fore-deck and was supported by two or three shrouds on each side, and a fore stay.

Although these boats were probably used for herring fishing in the season, some went trawling at other times of the year, and the boat shown in the drawing has a beam trawl. The beam appears to be about three-quarters the length of the boat, and it seems likely that the warp was secured to the transverse beam and led over a notch cut in the transom.

A photograph taken at Aberystwyth much later in the century, probably in the 1870's or early 1880, shows two fishing boats that are similar to these in many respects, but both are half-decked, with a central well and narrow waterways on either side, while one is clinker and the other carvel-built. They also bear some resemblance to the Southport fishing boats of the period and may demonstrate a stage in the development from the rather rough clinker-built boat of the 1820's, to the yacht-like carvel-built cutters which were characteristic of the area at the end of the century, and which

## ABERYSTWYTH BEACH BOAT

BUILT BY  
DAVID WILLIAMS & SONS  
TREFECHAN.  
ABERYSTWYTH



R.J.H. Lloyd.  
November, 1953.

Fig. 1.

resembled the Morecambe Bay prawners. These cutters varied in size and were up to 40 ft. in length, had an extreme rockered keel, rounded forefoot and a raking sternpost that supported an elliptical counter stern. The development from the straight to the rounded bow, and from the transom stern to the square and finally the elliptical counter was probably a gradual process, but the final result was a rather shallow draught, carvel-built craft, with a rig similar to the older cutters, the same long bowsprit and main boom, and carrying a set of jibs, stays'l and mains'l with a lug-headed tops'l that was later replaced by the jib-headed type. They were half-decked, with

a central well which was in some cases partly decked over with a coach roof and hatch. In recent years many were fitted with engines.

Few if any of them were built at Aberystwyth, but some may have been built at Conway and other places along the North Wales coast, while many more were built by Crossfield of Arnside, W. Armour of Fleetwood and other builders of the Morecambe Bay boats.

In 1953 three of these cutters, all motorized, remained at Aberystwyth, *Mersey*, *Mary Lou* and *Zephyr*. They were all privately owned and did not engage in the fishing. Three others that belonged to nearby places, were laid up in the harbour during the winter.

(2) 'Three-masted' boats (Plate VIII, a). These boats are interesting mainly because of their peculiar rig. It is not known when it was first introduced, but a boat with three masts is shown in an old print of Aberystwyth dated 1844. It has been suggested that the rig originated at Borth, a fishing village about 8 miles to the north, and was brought to Aberystwyth when some Borth men came to live there 'about the middle of the century'. While it has not been possible to confirm this, the rig was certainly in use at Borth later in the century, as in 1875 the 23 ft. boat *James* of Borth is described as having three sprit-sails.

The misleading way in which boats' rigs are described in the Register makes it impossible to determine exactly how many of these boats belonged to Aberystwyth, but *Rose* (AB 83) and *Morning Star* (AB 102) are described as having three masts carrying sprits'ls, and *Fire Fly* (AB 110) three masts with lug sails. The description 'sprints'l' and 'lug sail' is also in question, as in all the old photographs this type of boat is shown with a gaff-headed fores'l and mains'l and only the mizen carrying a sprits'l. There were a number of other three-masters, and *Gordon* (AB 45), *Clara* (AB 177), *Maid Meirion* (AB 39) and *Ocean Child* (AB 32) may have been some of them, though none are described in the Register as having three masts.

The clinker-built hulls were entirely undecked, and their long straight keels varied in length between 23 and 25 ft. The stern was fairly straight and the transom upright, while the general lines suggested that the boats were designed primarily for pulling. In fact, they were invariably sailed, though they did not sail well to windward and had to be helped round with an oar when going about. The hull was built locally, usually of yellow pine, and larch below water; timbers were steamed and there were four thwarts. Shingle from the beach was used for ballast and some was thrown overboard when beaching or to lighten the boat when heavily laden with fish.

All the masts and spars were very light. The foremast was stepped in the eyes of the boat, the main mast against the fore-side of the centre thwart to which it was clamped, and the mizen through a hole in the stern sheets a





*Pickering & Son, Aberystwyth*

(a) Three-masted Boat, Aberystwyth c. 1880.

*(Reproduced by kind permission of Mr T. W. Lewis, Aberystwyth)*



(b) Small Double-ended Beach-boat (1954).

*(Facing p. 156)*



foot or two from the transom. The foremast and the mainmast were about the same length, but the mizen was a good deal shorter, perhaps two-thirds the length of the other masts. When herring fishing, the mainmast was not carried, and the boat sailed under fores'l and mizen only. No jibs, stays'ls or tops'ls were ever used.

None of the masts carried any standing rigging, but the single throat and peak halyards led through sheaves in the mast and down to the gunwale on either side to provide the necessary support. The fore-sheets were double and led port and starboard to the after thwart, the main-sheets were single and so were the mizen-sheets which led through a sheave at the end of a long outrigger which was clamped to the transom, and then inboard. It was the practice to secure all sheets to the thwarts with a hitch that could be quickly cast off in an emergency.

Fores'l and mains'l were gaff-headed, loose-footed and boomless sails, while in most cases the mizen was a sprits'l, though there was at least one boat with a gaff-headed mizen (probably a later development). All the sails were made of light canvas, and had two rows of reef points, and the luff was seized to mast hoops. When shortening sail in a hurry it was the practice to lower the fore and main peaks and remove the sprit from the mizen.

Two pairs of oars were carried in most boats and were used in crutches, they also had the usual complement of warps, anchors, lamps and other gear, with a stone jar or small cask for drinking water for the crew of three.

Towards the end of the century these boats were used increasingly for carrying passengers during the holiday season. They always beached bows first so were subject to waves breaking over their transom, and were gradually replaced by double-enders which were much more suitable for embarking passengers off the beach.

The first double-ender was an old life-boat that had been converted to the three-masted rig, with a few modifications, including shrouds to the fore and main masts and brails to the fores'l and mains'l. These modifications were retained in the double-enders that followed and, in addition, the sprit mizen was changed to a gaff-headed sail. Altogether there were five or six double-enders rigged in this way, two were ex-lifeboats and these were followed by the *Victory*, built at Aberystwyth by David Williams in 1889. The last was the *Lizzie* which was built at Portmadoc. They were primarily passenger boats and none of them appear to have been used much for fishing, nor ventured far from Aberystwyth in spite of their greater size.

The shingle ballast used in the old boats was replaced by copper dross in the double-enders, and each boat that came into service had some modification to hull or rig that was an improvement on the one before. One of them, the Portmadoc-built *City of Birmingham*, was rigged as a ketch.



(3) *Herring gigs*. The gigs had a clinker-built hull with a narrow transom stern and lines very similar to the three masters, but they were smaller and their keel length varied between 16 and 21 ft. The smaller ones sometimes carried a sprit mizen as a riding sail when lying to their nets, but were otherwise just rowing boats; while the larger ones generally carried a sprit or gaff mains'l and a sprit mizen, but seldom, if ever, any headsails. As in the case of the three masters, masts and spars were very light and the mizen was sheeted through a sheave in the end of a long outrigger. It is doubtful if they performed well under sail and no doubt the oars had to be used a good deal, particularly when they were giving trips off the beach to holiday makers, which was their chief summer occupation. When fishing they carried a crew of two men, or three in some of the larger boats.

(4) *Small double-ended beach boats* (Plate VIII, *b* and text-fig. 1). Because the large double-enders that succeeded the old three-masted boats were found to be so suitable when working off the beach, a small double-ended beach boat was produced by Mr Williams the local boat-builder in the 1890's. They were clinker-built boats 18 ft. long and 6 ft. beam, with a well-rounded forefoot and a sternpost which raked to a degree that varied from boat to boat. They were primarily rowing boats for carrying passengers, but they used a standing lug sail off the wind and engaged in herring and line fishing in their season. They were rather light craft, but were highly thought of by the Aberystwyth men who would venture a considerable distance in them. At the beginning of the century there were 'a considerable number of them' and they carried a crew of two when herring-fishing and worked six to eight nets.

#### TRAWLING

The trawling grounds were off Aberayron and Newquay and as far south as Cardigan Head. It was said that 'for some distance north and south of Aberystwyth the fishing is not very good; but from a point seven miles south of Aberystwyth, and for a distance of forty miles in the same direction, there is good trawling ground inshore. The bottom consists of mud and sand, and the boats go six or seven miles out to sea. The fish caught are turbot, brill, sole, cod, ray, bass, mullett and flounder, with salmon off the mouth of the rivers'.<sup>9</sup> A much favoured place was the *Gutter* 'a soft clayey seabed stretching from about 5 miles south of Aberystwyth to Newquay Head'.<sup>2</sup> It was about 12 miles long and 2 miles wide with a depth of 14 fathoms in the *gutter* and 11 or 12 fathoms outside.<sup>14</sup>

The trawlers generally landed their catch every other day, unless particularly good catches made it necessary to do so more frequently. Naturally, being larger vessels, they could not be beached as the small

herring boats were, and had to enter the harbour at a suitable state of the tide.

*Trawlers.* Some of the early trawlers were of the type used on the north-west coast of England, others were small trading vessels that engaged in fishing during the season. The Aberystwyth trawlers during the last 25 years of the nineteenth century, were a mixed lot and few if any were built locally. Some were bought second-hand from distant fishing stations, such as the small trawler *Eagle* (AB 224) of 14 tons, which was bought in Scotland for £40 and fitted out for fishing for another £160.<sup>14</sup>

They varied in size up to 29 tons and almost all were decked vessels with sleeping accommodation for the crew, which consisted of three or four men and sometimes a boy. One of the largest trawlers, the Steam Schooner *Advance* (AB 204), was fishing in 1879 and carried a crew of six men, which was exceptional. She had a 60 ft. keel and was a vessel of 20 tons. Other large trawlers were *Gipsy King* (AB 71) and *Albatross* (AB 161) which appear to have been ketches of 29 and 19 tons respectively. Those that can just remember the Aberystwyth trawlers, say that most of the 1st-class boats were ketch, or Dandy, rigged, while the 2nd-class boats were cutters, but this is not confirmed by the Register. Their sails were barked and a beam trawl was used with a long beam, after the fashion of the Fleetwood and Liverpool boats.

#### LINE FISHING

There was very little long-line fishing, but many of the herring boats went fishing for whiting with hand lines during the summer. The fishing grounds were 5 to 7 miles south of Aberystwyth and the boats fished with three lines, each with two hooks baited with bits of herring or mussel. The boats usually left Aberystwyth at dawn and returned to sell their fish between 10 a.m. or 11 a.m. Sometimes they were successful early and were able to land and sell their fish in time to return to the fishing ground a second time.

Many of these boats, particularly the Morecambe Bay type cutters and the three-masted boats, went trawling for mackerel. They fished off New-quay or about 10 miles off Aberystwyth in June, and later on in Aberystwyth Bay, but although the mackerel were sometimes very plentiful they were always much smaller than the Kinsale fish.

#### FISHERMEN

The Aberystwyth fishermen worked on a share basis, and a boat with a crew of three would divide five shares, one for each member and one each for boat and gear. It was found that giving trips to holiday-makers was a

more congenial occupation than fishing during the summer and generally more profitable, so many fishermen changed their oilskin coat and trousers, sealskin cap or tam-o-shanter, for white cotton trousers, clean blue jersey and a bowler hat, and spent the summer months plying for hire off the beach in a variety of boats.

They do not appear to have been worried by most of the superstitions that were common amongst fishing communities in other places, though to burn fishbones was considered unlucky, while the scarcity of herrings after they had been so plentiful in the 1830's, was believed to be a curse for using the surplus fish for manuring the fields.<sup>15</sup>

Welsh was the language spoken by the majority, though apart from a few words such as *rhwyd* (net), English was used for most of the nautical and fishing terms.

### CONCLUSION

It may seem strange that the fishing industry at Aberystwyth did not develop to a greater extent in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Possibly the lack of a good harbour and the almost complete absence of an adequate refuge anywhere in Cardigan Bay, were two of the main reasons for this; yet there were other places in Britain which were able to support a much more flourishing industry although their harbours were no better than the one at Aberystwyth. The trawling grounds were not extensive and were sometimes overfished, while the herring shoals, which fluctuate characteristically, seem to have varied more in Cardigan Bay than in most other places.

River pollution, due to lead mining, may have affected the fishing in the immediate vicinity of Aberystwyth at one time, but in Cardigan Bay as a whole the fishing was good enough to entice large numbers of English fishermen to the area so that they greatly outnumbered the Welsh. The Aberystwyth men appear to have made little effort to find better fishing grounds further afield when conditions were poor in Cardigan Bay.

Perhaps the answer is to be found in the absence of local people prepared to invest capital in the industry, and the more profitable and less exacting occupations available to the men of the town. There had been an active lead-mining industry during the eighteenth century, while in the nineteenth century various occupations, connected with the development of the Port, such as shipbuilding, and the growth of the town as a holiday resort, provided many opportunities for alternative employment. Perhaps those that wished to follow a seafaring career preferred to serve as mariners aboard one of the many local trading vessels, rather than face the hardships of a fisherman's life.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Mr T. W. Lewis of Aberystwyth for much of the information contained in this article, and for copies of photographs of old Aberystwyth boats. I also wish to acknowledge the help I have received from H.M. Customs and Excise, Mr Lewis Daniel, Aberystwyth; Mr Alun R. Edwards, F.L.A., County Librarian, Llyfrgell Ceredigion, and Mr Colin Matheson, Keeper of Zoology, National Museum of Wales.

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## NOTES

## A COPPER PROCESSIONAL SHIP

The ship of copper here illustrated (Plate IX), of the end of the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century, was evidently made to be carried in procession, a tubular socket having been added beneath to fit the bearer's pole. As it came from Noirmoutier Island, it is possible that it may once have served in the church of the once important Abbaye de la Blanche there.

Although crude as to hull, its decks are richly decorated with répoussé scroll-work of renaissance style in which appear salamanders, that of the forecastle being hinged, to allow probably of the insertion of incense. Such ships are not common, but one might be carried as an emblem of seafarers, or simply as one of the Church, as an Ark of safety amid the perils of this life.

A curiously misunderstood detail is the cowbridge-head arch, typical of ships of the time, but here reversed and extended aft so as to resemble a hatchway, with its rounded top facing the stern. The metal of each side of the hull is brought up fore and aft to form a ready but very rough representation of the castles of an actual ship with their arched openings, and the sheets of copper are merely riveted together to form keel, stern and sternpost. Target-like 'hawseholes' are shown and 'planking' as if fastened together at intervals by billets across the seams, and imitating no possible construction in such a ship.

It is to the courtesy of its possessor, M. Sebastien Mioche, 42 rue Bonaparte, Paris VI<sup>e</sup>, that we owe the photographs of this ancient piece of church furniture.

R. MORTON NANCE

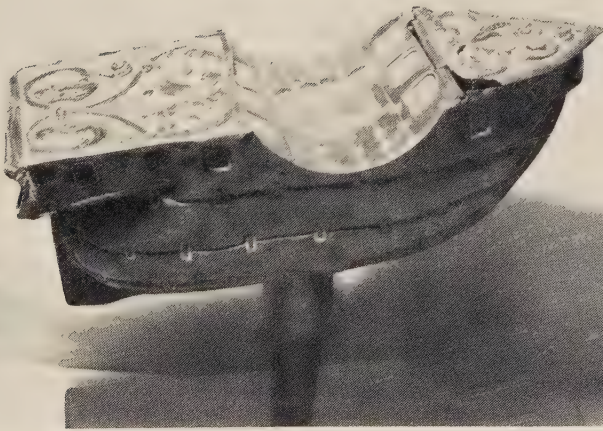
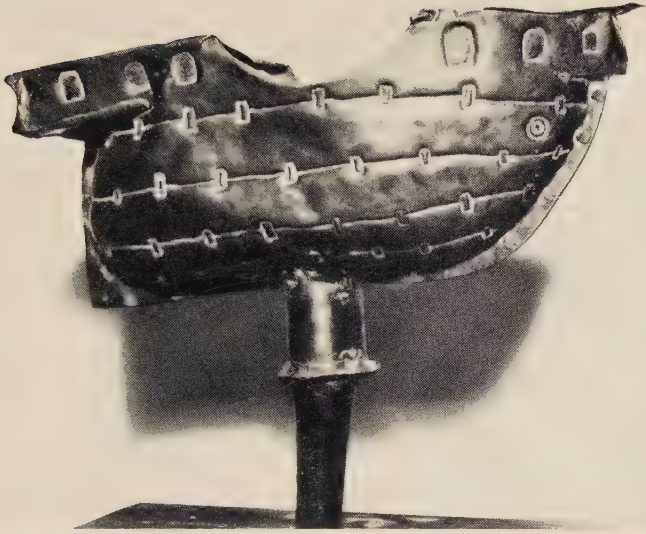
THE LOSS OF THE *SAN TELMO*

Captain Macdermott was certainly justified in describing San Martin's story of the loss and discovery of the *San Telmo* as 'strange', but I doubt very much whether he would have been justified in adding the words 'but true'. In the first place it conflicts seriously with what Commander Gould wrote in the *M.M.* in 1941 (p. 212), and I feel sure that his version was based on the best available authority. He told us that the *San Telmo* was found dismasted and rudderless and taken in tow by a storeship only to be abandoned in about 62° S. and never heard of again. I do not know when San Martin published his story, but according to him it was only 'a year or two' after 1819 that the *San Telmo* was found in the ice. If this was so, it is more than strange that Duro should have known nothing about it when he wrote his *Naufragios de la Armada Española* in 1867 or even when the final volume of his *Armada Española* appeared in 1903. In both of these he mentions the loss of the ship without any of San Martin's picturesque details.

Quite apart from this objection the story has its own very doubtful features. The fact that the *San Telmo* was a 74-gun 2-decker, whereas the ship in the ice is called 'a great 3-decker man-of-war', is perhaps unimportant, but the description of the ship as having her main-deck ports open and the guns run out is more than suspicious. I cannot believe that any ship would try to beat round Cape Horn in that state. Again, is it likely that one officer, one sergeant of marines and one dog would have remained on board, where they could do no possible good, when the rest of the crew abandoned the ship?

San Martin is said to have 'unearthed the tradition', but it seems far more likely that he invented it. The whole tale suggests to me a sort of combination of two stories published some fifty or sixty years ago, *The Frozen Pirate* and *In the Sargasso Sea*, the latter containing an account of the discovery of the U.S.S. *Wasp*, lost without trace in 1814, imbedded in an impossible concentration of hulks and seaweed many years later.

The *San Telmo* was not one of the Russian ships bought by Spain; she had been built at Ferrol in 1788. The ships actually bought were the following: five 74's—*Numancia* (ex *Lyubek*),



• COPPER PROCESSIONAL SHIP

(Facing p. 162)





*España* (ex *Nord Adler*), *Alejandro* (ex *Drezden*), *Velasco* (ex *Trech Soyatitelei*) and *Fernando VII* (ex *Neptunus*); six frigates—*Maria Isabel* (ex *Patrikii*), *Mercurio* (ex *Merkurii*), *Astrolabio* (ex ———), *Pronta* (ex *Prozornyi*), *Viva* (ex *Pospyeshnyi*) and *Ligera* (ex *Legkii*). This list is taken from Duro's book of 1867 (p. 284) and corrected from Veselago's *List of Russian Ships of War* (1872). Duro gives all the frigates 50 guns, but Veselago makes them 44's and 36's. The Russian name of the *Velasco* is given by Duro as *Epiphania*; this is probably due to some confusion between the Three Prelates of the actual Russian name and the Three Kings of the Epiphany.

Although the 74's had been launched as recently as 1810–13 and the frigates in 1815–16, nearly all these ships were soon found to be quite unfit for sea. The *Alejandro* started for South America with the *San Telmo*, but had to put back and never left Cadiz again, while the *Fernando VII* did one cruise in the Mediterranean, but the other battleships never left harbour and the *Velasco* never even left her dockyard. They were sold as useless in 1823. Of the frigates the *Astrolabio* proved as useless as the *Velasco*, but the rest did give some little service. Two were soon wrecked in the West Indies, two were sold at the same time as the battleships and one, the *Maria Isabel*, reached Chili, where she was taken by the Insurgents and did good work under the name *O'Higgins*.

R. C. ANDERSON

### THE TURBINIA

The speed of the *Turbinia* was not quite so much greater than that of her reciprocating-engined contemporaries as would be supposed from Mr Ireland's statement (p. 19) that 'the fastest warship of the time (1897) could just reach 27 knots'. By the time the *Turbinia* appeared in public the Russian *Sokol*, built in England, had done more than 29 knots and the Royal Navy had several of the '30-knot class' of destroyers in service, while in France the *Forban* had established a temporary record of rather more than 31 knots.

R. C. ANDERSON

### SAILORS' BAPTISM

Lord Bridport's comments (*M.M.*, vol. XL, p. 313) on my article on 'Sailors' Baptism in Scandinavian Waters' (vol. XL, p. 196 *seq.*) was most interesting. I appreciate it very much that different opinions can be discussed, and I thank him for his contribution. I do not, however, agree with his arguments and I should like to offer the following explanations.

When the question is about the historical development and the meaning of the custom, it is, of course, not sufficient to know the modern ceremonies which take place at the crossing of the Line. It is necessary to examine the numerous older statements of the baptism systematically. Then it will clearly be seen that the baptism has altered during the ages in several ways. But still it is evident that the ceremonies of course differ in details, but are alike in the main features. Furthermore, everyone who has studied the initiation ceremonies as they took place, especially among the artisans and students will, no doubt, be convinced that also those customs are identical with the baptism. Of course it is difficult to argue in a short reply, when I intend to write a whole book on the theme, but still I hope to convince sceptical readers in mentioning some of the common features in the initiation rites of the sailors, the artisans and the students:

(1) Only the novices are treated, not the old ones.

(2) The novices are baptized (or initiated in other ways) by those who have already been initiated.

(3) The usage takes place at important points, either on a voyage or in the course of their life.

(4) The initiation is performed with a solemn ceremony (with a number of fixed figures and on a certain schedule).

(5) The novices are ill treated, much to the amusement of the others.

(6) They must pay money to the old hands.

(7) Money is used for a common feast with much to drink.

(8) Drinking together is a sort of rite through which the baptized novices are admitted to the circle of the old and experienced comrades.

(9) Afterwards the novices are proud of their initiation which really has made them new and better people, and are very eager to treat other novices in the same way, a thing which now is their right.

(10) The custom is internationally spread and used in almost the same way.

I think that those are the most important common main points and that they cannot be disputed.

The baptism of the sailors takes place at important places, originally at *visible* points (viz. capes, rivers, islands, later on also lighthouses, bridges, etc.), but secondly also at *invisible* places, only known from the chart (the Equator, the Tropics, the Polar Circle, the Date-Line in the Pacific). Equally the young sailors and fishermen who for the first time go whaling or fishing are initiated in a similar, sometimes less ceremonial way.

The god of the Ocean, *Neptune*, is nowadays the most predominant person in the ceremonies on board. But it is rather curious to see that he first comes up approximately about the year 1780. Differently the immense rich French tradition shows the introduction of a personification of the Line or the Tropic about 1760 (*Bonhomme la Ligne*, *le Père Tropicque*, *Prince du Tropicque*, etc.). This means that the god Neptune by mere chance has come into the initiation ceremony, *where he originally has nothing to do*. The unlearned sailors knew him (and his wife *Amphitrite*) quite well from numerous pageants in the big cities of their countries (court festivals, Lord Mayor's pageants); he was a popular figure, and his image was to be seen on fountains, as figure-head on ships, as ornaments on representative buildings, etc. When he was once brought in connexion with the baptism of the Line it did not take a long time, before he was used on board ships of all nations, and at last he became the central figure of the ceremony. This again means that no conclusions to the meaning of the baptism can be drawn from the fact that the *Rex maris* is the leader of the ceremony to-day. The introduction of Neptune altered the ceremony considerably.

The certifications of which Lord Bridport gives an example are still younger. They appear about the year 1850 I should think. Personally I have never seen an original one older than from about 1890—I should really be very glad, if anyone of the readers is able to produce older ones and will send me a word about them.

Lord Bridport will surely forgive me, when, from a folkloristic point of view, I state that his opinions about the ceremonies as being 'of purification and homage before venturing into the unknown', or to 'obtain protection and to allay the fear of the unknown' are constructions of a still younger date. The romantic folklore science in Germany about 100 years ago tried to interpret all traditions in a symbolical way, not only folk tales but also superstitions, nursery rhymes, children's plays and customs. The scholars were not able at that time to view the more or less uncomplicated traditions realistically. I trust that the reader will agree with me in looking with objective eyes at the custom in question. The baptism of the sailors is their specific form of initiation which is (or was) used all over the world, among primitive as among civilized people.

With regard to the besmearing of the genitals of young sailors with grease and tar (p. 204 *seq.*) Lord Bridport gives a reference to Frazer's *Golden Bough*, where it is told that the Arcadians whipped their image of Pan 'to purify him from harmful influences which were impending him in the exercise of his divine functions as a god who should supply the hunter with game'. I must admit that I see no relation at all between the two ceremonies. The modern one is clearly a sort of initiation, however untraditional and rather unsavoury; the sailors who for the first time come onboard are examined by their new comrades in an intimate way (it is worth noticing that a similar sort of examination is known among the country lads too). They want to have some brutal fun in their own practical manner with the newcomers. The question about the image of Pan has nothing to do with that. Most modern folklore scientists nowadays use Frazer's great work as a rich collection of material, but I do not think that anyone believes in his conclusions. They simply are too far-fetched and fantastic, and, moreover, they are very often built up on casual likeness in the details but not in the totality of the customs in question. Frazer borrowed, as is well known, his theories from the German scientist Mannhardt. Both of them tried to find fertility rites in all usages, and before long they had a lot of pupils all over the world who revelled in fertility. Nowadays a more sober and realistic view has substituted the fertile fancy of the old scholars. Most readers, I trust, will find it hard to recognize the young sailor whose genitals are besmeared as a



'representation of the creative and fertilizing god of the harvest of the sea, i.e. the fishes'—especially as there is no question about fishing. The sailors themselves have a more brutal and straight explanation; they want to see if the new pal has venereal diseases, or if he is grown-up enough to accompany them on their visit to the brothels of the next harbour, where they put in.

HENNING HENNINGSEN

### THE KAMAL

Described by Sidi Ali ben Hussein in his work on navigation entitled *Mohit*, written in 1554, as an instrument used by the ancient seamen of the Indian and Eastern Seas.

The primitive Kamal consisted of nine rectangular pieces of wood of different sizes threaded on a length of cord through a hole in their centre.

To observe a star one or other of the boards was held in the hand with the arm outstretched. The end of the cord being either held in the hand or between the teeth. The board chosen was that which allowed the horizon being just seen under its lower edge, and the body under observation touching the upper edge, thus giving the altitude of the body observed according to the board used. Each board measured a different angle, from 4, 5, 6 to 12 isbas. The isba was a unit of length but was also used for measuring angles, being equal to  $1^{\circ} 43'$ , though this equivalent was not always adhered to in the *Mohit*.

Later the Kamal was modified and consisted of a single board, its length being twice its breadth. The cord passing through its centre hole had seven knots tied at intervals along its length. The *Mohit* explains how to calculate the distance between the knots.

It was used as described: if the knot nearest the board was held between the teeth and the breadth of the board used to measure the distance between the horizon and the body observed, the angle measured was 12 isbas. The second knot held between the teeth measured one unit less, or 11 isbas, and so on till the 7th knot which measured 6 isbas. If the length or breadth of the board was used to measure the altitude of the body, the first knot measured 6 isbas, decreasing half an isba with each knot: the last knot measuring 3 isbas. This enabled the observer to measure angles between 12 and 3 isbas, or from  $24^{\circ}$  to  $8^{\circ} 34'$ . Navigators were thus able to calculate latitudes between  $24^{\circ}$  and  $8^{\circ} 34'$  by observing the altitude of Polaris. That is between Muscat, the mouths of the Indus, and the Channel between India and the Maldive Islands, or between Calcutta and the Nicobar Islands.

One of these instruments was used by the Arab pilot who piloted Vasco da Gama across the Indian Ocean on his first voyage.

The Kamal used by the Portuguese on Cabral's voyage to India (1500) consisted of three boards threaded on the cord, the cord being divided into isbas which the Portuguese knew how to convert into degrees.

The Kamal was known among the Portuguese by the name of 'Tavoleta', little board, or 'Tavoleta da India'. The Tavoletas used by the Portuguese later had the cord knotted so that degrees were given instead of isbas, and two types were used: the 'Tavoleta Pequena' or small Tavoleta and the Tavoleta Grande. The small Tavoleta measured angles between  $5^{\circ}$  and  $14^{\circ}$  and the Tavoleta Grande from  $14^{\circ}$ .

Joao da Lisboa, Portuguese Navigator, in his book on Navigation, 'Livro da Marinharia' (Book of Navigation), 1514, explains how to use both the Tavoleta Pequena and Grande.

The illustrations show the Kamals in the Hamburg Ethnographical Museum. That shown in the top figure was brought to Hamburg in 1892 by Captain Daher, the Master of a German ship trading between Hamburg and Calcutta. It was given to him by the Master of an Indian or Arab vessel trading off the Coromandel coast.

A. Schruock in *Das Ausland*, 1892, describes it as 'An old Arab or Hindu instrument for determining the altitude of certain places'. The board measured 6 cm.  $65 \times 4$  cm. 8 and had a thickness of 4 mm. The cord was knotted at intervals with 16 knots corresponding to the altitude of the pole of the 16 ports situated between Galle Point, Ceylon, along the Coromandel coast to the mouths of the Ganges. When using the longer side vertical, six altitudes of Polaris could be

measured between  $22^{\circ}$  and  $16^{\circ}$ , corresponding to six ports. Using the narrower side, ten altitudes between  $6^{\circ}$  and  $15^{\circ}$  corresponding to ten more ports. To some of the knots are tied short bits of cord which probably served to mark the principal ports of call.

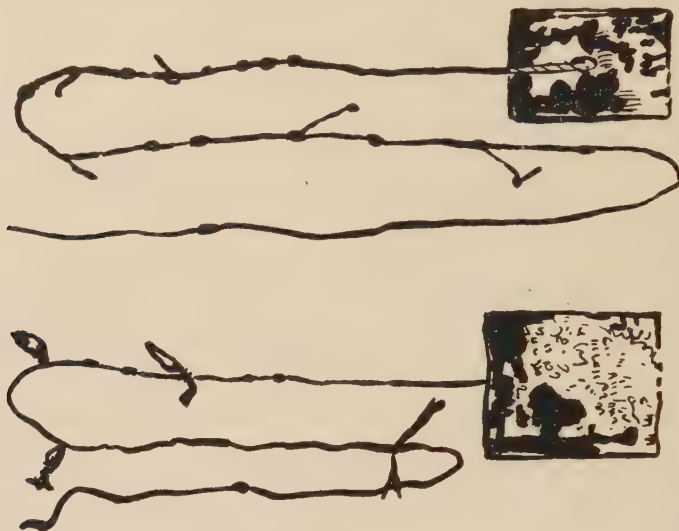


Fig. 1

#### SIDI ALI BEN HUSSEIN

Sidi Ali Ben Hussein was an Egyptian Admiral in the reign of the Emperor Soleimon I, 1519–66. He was the *Caplam Alecheluby* mentioned by the Portuguese writer and historian *Diego Couto* in *Decadas*, Vol. I, book x, chap. xx. He had been instructed by the Turks to escort fifteen galleys to Suez which had taken refuge in Bassora. He attempted this in August 1554, but was attacked by the Portuguese off Muscat who captured six of his galleys. He lost two more at Damao and another at Darsu, eventually taking refuge with the remaining vessels at Surate in September.

After this defeat he seems to have retired to Ahmedabad where he wrote, in Turkish, his Nautical Treatise, *Mohit*, in which he says that he made use of both ancient and modern writers whose names he mentions. Among the modern writers cited by him is Ahmed ibn Majid, author of a number of works on navigation and nautical astronomy, written in prose and verse, which are in the National Library, Paris. According to Gabriel Ferrand it was he who piloted Vasco da Gama across the Indian Ocean on his first voyage.

In 1825 a copy of the *Mohit* was seen by Joseph von Hammer, Baron Purgstall, Professor of Oriental Languages of Vienna University, in the Murzi Borbonica, Naples. Some years later he acquired a copy dated 1558 in Constantinople.

B. ENGLAND

#### MATTHEW WALKER

The question: Who was Matthew Walker? has been asked in the *M.M.* more than once without being answered. Probably we shall never know, but we can at least get some idea of his date. Steel (1794) puts wall knots (or walnut knots) on his laniards, but Darcy Lever (1808) uses a 'Matthew Walker's knot' and describes this on an earlier page as 'a handsome knot for the end of a laniard'. This apparently unnecessary recommendation rather suggests that the knot may have been a comparative novelty when he wrote. If we ever come across a boatswain or a rigger called

Matthew Walker, I fancy we shall find that he was at work in the last 20 years of the eighteenth century. By the way Darcy Lever's preference for this knot was not shared by Martelli (1831); he described it as 'liable to capsize'.

R. C. ANDERSON

### BRITISH NAVAL OFFICERS IN THE SERVICE OF PORTUGAL

I have been turning out a mass of old papers, including a box dating from my Lisbon chaplaincy 1937-45.

Among these I have found the enclosed list of British naval officers in Portugal, copied from a paper in the British chaplaincy at Lisbon.

I know nothing of the origin of this, but it may be of interest to some of your readers.

Copy of Note found by me among the papers of the British Chaplaincy in Lisbon 1939. I have no idea of the date; probably about 1820, I think. H. F. Fulford Williams.

1. CROSBIE, THOMAS. Comm. Nau. 'Dom Pedro'. 1822.
2. CAMPBELL, DONALD. Comm. Nau. 'Princessa de Beira'. 1792. Comm. Nau. 'Dom. Henrique'. 1795. Admiral. His Faithful Majesty's Navy. Died May 6, 1806. Buried British Cemetery, Lisbon.
3. FORD, Jos. Post Captain. Nau. 'S. Jose'. 1759.
4. HARDCASTLE, GEORGE. Com. Nau. 'Graca Devina'. 1776.
5. HARTLEY or HORTLEY, JOHN WILLIAM. Post Captain. Comm. Nau. 'Nossa Senior De Rosario'. 1723.
6. KINFEE, WILLIAM. Post Capt. Com. Nau. 'Nossa Seniors de Cencimento'. 1749.
7. McDONNELL, ROBERT. Admiral of the Fleet sent to Brazil 1775.
8. PHILIP, ARTHUR. Com. Nau. 'S. Antonio e S. Jose'. 1776.
9. PIERPOINT, LOUIS. Com. Nau. 'Nossa Seniors des Mercers'. 1740.
10. ROBERTS, WILLIAM. Com. Nau. Frigate. 'S. Joao Baptista'. 1776. Buried British Cemetery Lisbon Nov. 11, 1784.
11. STEVENS, THOMAS. Com. Nau. 'Nazareth'. 1776. Com. Nau. Frigate 'Principe de Brazil'. 1776.
12. STONE, THOMAS. Comm. Nau. 'Rainha de Portugal'. 1797-1801.
14. THOMPSON, DANIEL. Post Captain. Nau. 'S. Antonio'. 1799.

FULFORD WILLIAMS

This list differs slightly from that appearing on page 340, Vol. 27 (1941).—*Editor*.

### LIMES, LEMONS AND SCURVY IN ELIZABETHAN AND EARLY STUART TIMES

It is to the credit of the East India Company that it attempted to tackle the problem of preserving the health of its crews. It strictly enjoined cleanliness, and provided good rations, surgeons and special stores for the sick. In 1614 Dr John Woodall, a surgeon of long-standing and high repute, was appointed by the Company to be Surgeon-General with the task of seeing to the selection of suitable ship's surgeons and the supervision of their medical stores and instruments. In 1617, 'being wearied with writing for every shippe the same instructions a new', Woodall put them into print under the title of: *The Surgion's Mate, or A Treatise Discovering faithfully and plainly the due contents of the Surgions Chest, the uses of the Instruments, the vertues and operations of the Medicines, the cures of the most frequent diseases at Sea: Namely Wounds, Apostumes, Ulcers, Fistulaes, Fractures, Dislocations With the true maner of Amputations, the cure of the Scurvie, Tenasmus, and exitus Ani, the Callenture; With a Brief Explanation of Sal, Sulphur, and Mercury; with certaine Characters and tearmes of Arte.*

The title page also explained that the work was 'Published chiefly for the benefit of young Sea-Surgions, imployed in the East-India Companies Affaires'.



In this exhaustive treatise, the first of its kind, surgery, medicine, and hygiene at sea were dealt with thoroughly. Woodall paid particular attention to scurvy, its probable causes, and its prevention. Of lime-juice as an anti-scorbutic he wrote, 'how excellent hath it been approved', perpetuating thereby, perhaps, the idea long current that it was the best. In fact the vitamin C content of limes is much lower than that of oranges and lemons which are therefore better anti-scorbutics. Unfortunately Woodall recommended that their juice should be administered on reaching shore, and said nothing about its issue whilst at sea.

Although from the time of their first voyages lime juice was frequently issued to East Indian crews scurvy continued to take terrible toll of the crews. Lancaster could have taught Woodall more about anti-scorbutics, but no doubt professional teaching and etiquette ruled out his successful empiricism.

On the first voyage of the East India Company Lancaster had left Tor Bay on 20 April 1601, and as a consequence had got caught in 'the calmes and contrarie winds' prevalent off Guinea in early summer. He had spent a month in the Doldrums and had not 'doubled the line' and lost sight of the Pole Star until the end of June. This had meant that he had reached the Brazilian Coast in mid-winter. Although he did succeed in doubling Cape St Augustine he could not circumvent the S.E. Trades. As a result he had a most tedious passage to the Cape, and many men fell sick. On arrival, *in all save his own ship*, the men had become so enfeebled after four and a half months at sea without anti-scorbutics that the crews 'could hardly handle the sayles' to bring the ships to anchor. Only Lancaster had brought to sea with him certain bottles of the juice of lemons, of which, it was reported, he had given to each of his crew as long as it lasted 'three spoonfuls every morning...'

It was a tragedy for generations of seamen that Lancaster's example was not more generally followed. That it was not we must attribute to a combination of negligence, ignorance, parsimony and, as already suggested, the influence of professional medical opinion.

The first English sailor's word book to be published, Captain John Smith's *An Accidence for Young Sea-men: Or Their Path-way to Experience*, of 1626 contained advice on the care of victuals, the seamen's health, and the selections of comforts for them. The success of this word-book encouraged Captain Smith to bring out in the following year *The Seaman's Grammar With the Plaine Exposition of Smith's Accidence for the Young Sea-men, enlarged*... , so

'That now th'untraveld land-man may with ease  
Here know the language both of ships and seas.'

Any sea captain who followed Captain Smith's advice would have provided a 'petty-tally' for the comfort of the sick. This would have included rice, currants, prunes, sugar, oil, butter, '*Aqua vitae, the best Wines, the best Waters, the iuyce of Lemons* for the Scurvy, white Bisket, Oat-meale, Gammons of Bakon', and such like fortifiers, delicacies and anti-scorbutics.

Smith's *Seaman's Grammar* was regularly revised and reprinted during the seventeenth century. For some reason Mainwaring's *The Sea-mans Dictionary: Or An Exposition and Demonstration of all the Parts and Things belonging to a Shippe: Together with an Explanation of all the Terms and Phrases used in the Practice of Navigation* appears to be better known than Smith's *Seaman's Grammar* yet the latter was published nearly twenty years before Mainwaring's *Dictionary* and was still being published years after the last edition of the *Sea-man's Dictionary*. Mainwaring incidentally, does not discuss the petty-tally or scurvy.

Mainwaring's MS. of the *Sea-mans Dictionary* was written between 1620 and 1623. Whether Smith's MS. was written is not known. Probably it was written after Mainwaring's because the occasion of the publication of the *Accidence* was the war with Spain that broke out in 1625. It had been marred by the Cadiz fiasco of that year, and by incidents with France which in 1626 had brought that country into the war against England. In 1627 the Rochelle Expedition's signal failure emphasized the need for a *Seaman's Grammar*. Captain John Smith's met it admirably. It contained sound advice for handling a ship in action and for equipping it for overseas voyages.

In an age notorious for the ill-treatment accorded to seamen, *The Seaman's Grammar* stands out

as a work enjoining that the utmost consideration should be given by captains to the health of and well-being of the seamen in their care. Captain Smith's 'Advertisements for young Commanders, Captaines and Officers' reminded them that 'men of all other professions in lightning, thunder, stormes and tempests, with raine and snow may shelter themselves in dry houses, by good fires, with good cheare' whereas those are the very times 'that Seamen must stand to their tacklings, and attend with all diligence their greatest labour upon the Deckes', for 'there is no dallying nor excuses with stormes, gusts, overgroune seas, and ley shores'. It was for the aftermath of such times 'when poore men are all wet, and some have not so much as a cloth to shift him, shaking with cold' that good sea officers laid in their petty-tally for, he reminded them, at sea there 'is neither Ale-house, Taverne, nor Inne to burne a faggot in, neither Grocer, Poulterer, Apothecary, nor Butcher's shop', where men may seek liquor, victuals and warmth after a night of storm.

Unhappily, it would seem, Captain John Smith's advice was only too often ignored when it came to the humane treatment of seamen in the ships of the Royal Navy, and to advice on the issue of 'the iuyce of Lemons for the scurvy'.

D. W. WATERS

### HENRY BAILLIE

In an article printed in 1947 on British and American Officers in the Russian Navy I mentioned Henry Bailly as joining with the rank of midshipman in 1783 and added 'not afterwards mentioned'. I ought to have realized that this officer was almost certainly the same as the Henry Baillie, an Irishman, who took an important part in operations in the south of Italy in 1799. The only excuse for this omission lies in the fact that Russian authorities disguise the name as 'Belli' and so make it difficult to recognise.

Baillie's record should read as follows: joined as midshipman 1783. Lieutenant (Black Sea Fleet)—1787 *Skoryi* 40 (in command). Captain-lieutenant—1790–1 repeating ship *Polotsk* (actions of those years); 1797–9 *Stchastliwyi* 32 (Adriatic and expedition to Naples). Captain—1804–9 *Azia* 74 (Adriatic. Ship left at Trieste and crew back to Russia).

Another name should be added to the list. John Bell, an English midshipman, joined as a lieutenant in 1789 (Baltic Fleet). I have not found him mentioned again.

R. C. ANDERSON

### ANSON'S VOYAGE

The following mural inscription is in Cumnor Church, Berkshire: 'In Memory of | Norris Hodson Shipwright | and Marriner, born in this Town | the 14th of June 1716 and died | on Board of his Majestys ship | the Gloucester in the squadron | Commanded by Commadore Anson | on the 14th of June 1741. | And was buried in the great South | Sea, in Hope of a joyful Resurrection | When the sea shall give up her dead. | Our Life is ever on the wing, | And death is ever nigh; | The Moment we begin to live | We all begin to die. | This Monument was erected at | the Sole Expence of | Mr John Quainton 1943.'

J. W. D. POWELL

### THE NEWQUAY PILOT GIGS

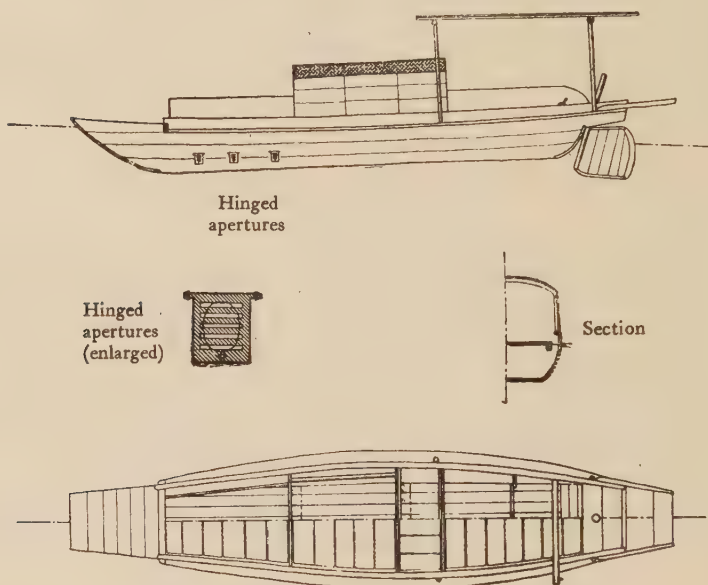
Mr Richard Gillis of the Newquay Rowing Club has recently drawn my attention to the drawing by the late P. J. Oke of the pilot gig *Newquay* in the collection of the Coastal and River Craft Sub-Committee of the Society for Nautical Research. The caption to this drawing states that the gig was built by Peter Ferris of St Mawes about 1820. Mr Gillis tells me that in an endeavour to confirm this statement he has come to the conclusion that the gig was in fact built by the Peters family at St Mawes about the year 1810, as one of three constituted for shipment to India. One of them was not shipped and was sold instead to Newquay owners. Mr Frank Peters, the present owner of the boatyard concerned, recently discovered in one of his sheds some fifty moulds of the type used to build the pilot gigs, four of these so well matched the *Newquay* that, in

Mr Peters' opinion, they comprise part of the set used to build her, probably nearly a century and a half ago.

The Newquay Rowing Club's fleet of three gigs has recently been expanded by purchase from the Scilly Isles to six. The boats have been refitted and repainted in their original gay colours.

BASIL GREENHILL

### THE LIVE FISH CARRIER OF THE YANGTZE



The Chinese are commonly credited with having been the first to turn their attention to fish culture by collecting and disseminating the spawn and artificially rearing fry, which they employed for the purpose of stocking every available stretch of water. T'ao Chu-kung, who lived in the fifth century B.C., is generally supposed to be the first to practise fish breeding. It is said that he dug a pond the size of an acre, leaving nine islands scattered about it; the nine islands were to deceive the fish, who innocently thought they were in the 'big ocean travelling round nine continents'. T'ao Chu-kung not only bred fish, but wrote about them, notably in the *Yu Ching*, some centuries before the Christian era. This great work is considered by modern fishermen to be somewhat out of date.

Pisciculture, therefore, not for the promotion of sport, as in England, but for the strictly utilitarian motive of providing food for China's millions, is still very extensively practised in the region of the delta and also throughout the Lower Yangtze areas.

Fish are brought down from the fish farms to the markets of Shanghai in especially designed craft. These boats have two bulkheads and two frames. The usual length is 37 ft. with a beam of 8½ ft. The fore hold right up to the first bulkhead can be converted into an aquarium so as to deliver the live cargo in a marketable condition. To fill the fish tank apertures are fitted with hinged flaps. When the boat is returning empty after discharging its lively cargo leak stoppers are employed. On arrival at the fish wharves in Shanghai the fish are ladled out and the boat proceeds back to the fish farms for another cargo.

G. R. G. WORCESTER



## MUMBLES OYSTER SKIFFS

Further information about the Mumbles oyster skiffs, and about the oyster fisheries in Swansea Bay, is available in an excellent little book by Colin Matheson, M.A., B.Sc., called *Wales and the Sea Fisheries*, published in 1929 by the National University of Wales and the Press Board of the University of Wales, Cardiff, in 1929.

According to the author, the name 'Oystermouth', formerly used for Mumbles, has nothing to do with oysters. Evidence is adduced for the popularity of the 'small delicious oyster' of this area in 1803, and it is said that 'well into the nineteenth century the fishery was prosecuted in small rowing boats. The arrival of the first skiff was locally regarded as an affair of great importance; it was named *The Seven Sisters* in honour of the owner's bevy of daughters.'

The author also claimed that, at the time of writing, the Mumbles oyster fishery was showing 'signs of recovering, though slowly, from a prolonged decline, the reasons for which are not wholly clear'. (He supports Mr Lloyd's contention that the loss of a proper shelter for boats, still apparent as I saw myself when weatherbound off the Mumbles last year, was a serious obstacle to the revival of the local oyster fishery.)

The recovery spoken of by Mr Matheson apparently came to a halt, and the Mumbles oyster industry, like the oyster industry in some parts of Ireland where it was once considerable—notably Carlingford—is now largely a memory. Meanwhile, the oyster is generally considered something of a luxury. It does seem a pity that local interests in the areas of these old oyster fisheries cannot set to work to make it possible, preferably by the establishment of some form of local oyster fishermen's co-operative, with the excellent scientific advice now available, to restore the prosperity of the past, and put oysters within the reach of every family in these islands.

J. DE C. IRELAND

THE SPANISH *DON* (see *M.M.* Vol. 1, p. 45)

'Don' before a Spaniard's name. This reminds me of some faulty use of 'Don' in past numbers of *M.M.* Fellow-readers may be interested to hear that, although any male is entitled to it, its use is similar to that of Sir in English, i.e. with Christian name, or equivalent, only. Don, with the Christian name is equivalent to Señor with the family name; just a little more colloquial, but by no means restricted to quite informal intercourse. About 1908 I recall having heard a well-trained Spanish rating answering an order from an officer: 'Ya voy (I am going to do it at once), don foré', same as a British blue jacket would say 'Aye, aye, Sir.'

GIULLEUX LA ROËRIE

## SHIPBUILDING AT ANNAN

One small and unimportant vessel can be added to the list given by Commander Tweedie in 1951 (p. 135). This is the *Friendship* sloop of 59 tons, built in 1828 and described as a Liverpool coaster.

R. C. ANDERSON

## QUERIES

**13. DRAKE'S DRUM.** Drake's Drum: mentioned in *The Mariner's Mirror*, Vol. VII, p. 152. Sir Henry Newbolt's poem is known. Can any member supply any information regarding the basis of this saying, and of the drum's voyage with the cruiser *Devonshire*. Who is the owner of the drum?

H. F. KIER

**14. THAMES-MEDWAY CANAL.** The two tunnels situated on the railway line between Gravesend and Strood. The Thames-Medway Canal was authorized in 1800 and completed in 1824. In 1845 a single line of railway was laid along the tow path of the Canal and the following year

the water-way was purchased by the South Eastern Railway who filled up the Canal and opened a double line track from Denton, near Gravesend, to Strood, this line being opened on 23 August 1847.

It is possible that very few travellers by the line to-day realise that they are travelling through tunnels which were originally built for the Thames-Medway Canal.

One would think that this Canal, linking these two very important rivers, would have been of *vital* importance from naval, military, and civil points of view, at that time.

Can any one put forward a possible explanation as to why it was abandoned as a waterway?

W. ADAM WOODWARD

**15. THAMES-SIDE MARINE ENGINE WORKS OF EIGHTY YEARS AGO.** About eighty years ago, very many of the largest steamships, both naval and mercantile, were fitted with marine engines which were constructed at engineering works near the Thames which had no actual wharf or slipway on the river bank.

The John Penn works at Greenwich, and the Maudslay Works at Lambeth are examples of this arrangement where the workshops were situated a short road distance from the river.

Both of these works buildings still exist, but are now used for other purposes.

This arrangement must have necessitated the transport by *road* of some very heavy and massive engine parts such as bed-plate castings, cylinders, crank-shafts, etc.

As, in those days, the heavy multi-wheel trailers of the kind used to-day and called Tank-Transporters were then quite unknown, it would be interesting to know how this heavy road transport was done. No doubt many teams of horses or traction engines pulling heavy iron-tyred trailers were employed. Perhaps some of your readers can supply some recorded information on the subject, or may have some old illustrations, photographs or newspaper accounts of these transport operations.

The writer understands that the Maudslay Works had a loading-wharf situated on the river bank on or near the site now occupied by the L.C.C. County Hall, whence the engine parts were transported by barge or lighter to the shipyards lower down the river; the engine parts would, however, have to be taken by road from the works to this wharf. Incidentally, the writer remembers being taken as a boy to the sale of machine-tools and other equipment at the Maudslay Works just before it was closed; this would be round about the year 1900.

That splendid collection of marine engine models known as the 'Maudslay Collection' and now to be seen at the Science Museum, S. Kensington, were, at that time, kept at the works.

At the sale all the items were marked as 'Lots' prior to the auction, and it was rather amusing to see that one of the work people had marked a beer-bottle with the label 'Lot o'.

W. ADAM WOODWARD

**16. POLACRES.** Falconer states that polacres had no foot-ropes on any save the lower yards (on those of her pole masts). I have seen the statement repeated by a number of English and American writers, none of whom give any authority for it. I have found no Mediterranean writer who says this. Standing upon a yard below would have been such an imperfect substitute for a foot-rope that the statement is unconvincing, especially as so many of Falconer's statements about Mediterranean vessels are flatly contradicted by evidence of Mediterranean origin. The paintings of the Roux family of Marseilles, as far as they are known to me, and statements made to me by Mediterranean seamen, attribute foot-ropes to the topsail yards of polacres. Can any one supply evidence of their absence?

D. L. DENNIS

**17. TRUSSING.** What does *trussing* mean in these two quotations from E 101-44-17 dating from 1409 to 1411?

(French membrane)...xxj. Polives sheved vij. Polivestokkes sanz sheves ij. peire Susters iiij. Boltes de fferre pour trussing vne Mustardquerne...

(*Ibid.* membr. 9 d.)...a ij. hengepolives cum les strops a j. bowespritepolive a xxj. polyves a vij. polyvestokkes sine sheves a ij. pair' susters a iiij. boltes de ferro pro trussing'...

The two entries are dependent on each other. Apparently *trussing* is not a variant of *truss*, *truss-line*, *truss-rope*, *trusser* which all occur about this time in the sense 'truss of a yard'. Could it be the pin of a block, the sheave pin? Or is it (which I think is less likely) the gerund of the verb *to truss*?

B. SANDAHL

## ANSWERS

3. (1929.) CUTTER-BRIGS OR BRIG-CUTTERS. On page 12 of Steel's *Naval Architecture* it is stated: 'In the Royal Navy when cutter-built vessels are thus rigged (i.e. as brigs) they are termed cutter-brigs.' In the tabular part of the same book there are given the offsets and detailed dimensions of a 'brig-cutter' of 399 tons. From the data supplied I think one may infer:

(1) That this vessel was not so-called because she had once been cutter rigged, as nothing is less probable than a cutter of such size.

(2) It is difficult to determine just what contemporary seamen considered to be the distinguishing marks of the cutter hull; the only one whom I can find who expressed himself is Lescallier, who gives (*Termes de Marine*, Part II, p. 187) great draft and small freeboard. Steel evidently concurs as far as draft is concerned for he says (p. 160) that if the trial cutter had been built without sliding keels she would have drawn 13 ft. draft, of 0.20 of her length. I think two other characteristics were inherent in the cutter; a very large breadth-length ratio (0.35 to 0.40) and the absence of a head. There were other qualities such as a large difference in draft, a raking stern-post, an almost triangular midship-section below the load line, but these were not peculiar to the cutter.

Steel's brig-cutter has a draft aft of 0.145 her length, a very considerable freeboard (13 ft. 6 in. forward and aft and 7 ft. 2 in. in waist in a length on deck of 102 ft.) for a vessel of her type, a breadth-length ratio of 0.29, and she has a head. Her midship section is quite unlike that of a cutter; the depth-breadth ratio is much greater; she has a rising floor but with a bilge of large radius commencing far below the load line, and the flare above the water line of a Mediterranean vessel. Her maximum breadth is at topside line which overhangs the load line about 18 in. She does have a great difference in draft (4 ft. 8 in.) and a raking stern-post but such features were by no means peculiar to cutters. It accordingly seems unjustified to assume that she received her type-name because she had a cutter's hull.

(3) There is nothing in Steel to denote that this vessel was clench-built, unless it be that her scantling was generally less than that of other vessels of comparable size in Steel's table. She is large to be clench-built, but not extraordinarily so, for Vial du Clairbois (*Encyclopédie Méthodique*, article *Border*) mentions a clench-built vessel of 22 guns, and a beam of 27.7 (English) feet. The whole question turns upon the sense that Fincham and the author of Steel attributed to the expression 'cutter-built'. Here we have the authority of no one less than Robert C. Leslie (*Old Sea Wings*, p. 49) that the term meant clench-built. Leslie unquestionably was familiar with seamen and builders who were contemporaries of Fincham, and the author of Steel, and (Mr Carr Laughton's misgivings about Leslie's use of 'running before the wind' notwithstanding) no one ever lived who understood better the language of seamen.

A writer in *The Mariner's Mirror* advances the conjecture that a brig-cutter might have had a reefing bowsprit. Steel makes the stem head of his vessel extend about 18 in. above the topside, which suggests that the bowsprit may have been stepped on one side of the stem. But apart from numerous considerations that would make a reefing bowsprit quite out of place, Steel gives the dimensions of the oblong gammoning hole in the head-knee—a certain indication of a standing bowsprit.

D. L. DENNIS

13. (1943.) BLUE NOSES. This term appears to have developed as a general description of Nova Scotians or Maritimers, and in turn was applied to Nova Scotian sailing vessels in the nineteenth century. Its origin is often attributed to the liberal use of blue paint on the big wooden vessels



and the blue noses produced by the Nova Scotian climate. This legend has been popularly accepted in Nova Scotia since the designation has become a local mark of distinction which was perpetuated by the world-wide fame of the beautiful and speedy schooner *Bluenose* in the International Fishing Schooner Races.

Judge Thomas Chandler Haliburton, the creator of the Sam Slick stories, seems to explode this theory, for writing in the early part of the nineteenth century, in his book *The Old Judge, or Life in a Colony*, he explains that the term 'Blue Nose' as applied to Nova Scotians 'is acquired from a superior potato of that name, of the good qualities of which the Nova Scotians never tired of talking, being anxious, like most men of small property, to exhibit to the best advantage the little he had'. An old invoice of 1807 confirms this and records the shipment of a consignment of potatoes as follows: 'Shipped by the Grace of God in good order and well conditioned by Collins and Allison, in and upon the good ship *Swallow*, whereof is master under God for the present voyage, Edward Crosby, and now riding at anchor in the harbour of Halifax and by God's Grace bound for Boston with 500 bushels of "Roses" and "Bluenose" potatoes.'

To Nova Scotians, the new car and passenger ferry, SS *Bluenose*, which is to operate between Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, and Bar Harbour, Maine, in 1955, has inherited a proud name which, despite the humble origin from the potato, has helped to make famous the maritime history of the Atlantic seaboard of Canada.

L. FARRINGTON

2. (1946.) THE HARPOONER. It seems unlikely that the *Harpooner*, letter-of-marque ship of 1782, was the same as the Whitby whaler of that name lost in 1792. The first was of 250 tons and the second, according to Lubbock's list, 341 tons. If the model in the museum at Hull described and illustrated in the *M.M.* in 1919 does indeed represent the Whitby *Harpooner*, there is another difficulty, because, as was pointed out in 1920, the model has a pink stern, whereas the ship of 1782 was described as having a square stern.

There is a contradiction in Lubbock's book. On p. 133 he says the *Harpooner* of Whitby (built in 1769) was lost in 1792 and on p. 409 that she served as a transport in 1814. Probably there is a confusion between the Whitby ship and her namesake from London, also mentioned in 1919. In view of the London ownership of the letter-of-marque ship it does seem reasonably likely that she was the same as this London whaler and may even have been the same as the transport of 1814 and the Bremen ship of 1826.

R. C. ANDERSON

26. (1954.) BOMB-KETCHES. Plans of bombs are among Admiralty draughts at the National Maritime Museum, but as far as I know there are no spar or rigging plans of details there.

H. L. CHAPELLE

27. (1954.) GRENADO. Bomb-ketch, built at Ipswich 1742 by John Bernard or Barnard *Bideford* 24 guns by same builder.

H. L. CHAPELLE

27. (1954.) BIDEFORD AND GRENADO. According to Rupert-Jones 'Navalis' both the *Bideford* and *Grenado* were built at Ipswich by John Bernard.

T. D. MANNING

28. (1954.) TERRIBLE. Steele's Navy List for 30 June 1782 states that the *Terrible* was burnt at New York. Rupert-Jones says she was burnt at New York as unserviceable after action on 5 September 1781.

T. D. MANNING

29. (1954.) LAUNCHING WAYS. The 'stern stays' were probably what are now known as 'poppets', wedged up at heels before launching. They are really braces, stepped on the launching cradle to support and steady bow and stern where hull-form prevents use of bilge blocks. Apparently sand got on the 'ground ways', in setting up on these, or had sifted down from the 'sliding ways'. Was this sabotage?

H. L. CHAPELLE

## REVIEWS

JAN PIETERSZ COEN. BESCHIEDEN OMTRENT ZIJN BEDRIJF IN INDIË. By Dr W. P. COOLHAAS. The Hague, M. Nijhoff, 1952-3. 11  $\frac{1}{4}$   $\times$  7  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches; Vol. VII, pt. 1, xi + 928 pages; Vol. VII, pt. 2, pages 929-1943. Price, fl. 80 for each of the two parts.

The late W. H. Moreland, one of the leading English authorities on Indian history, wrote just over thirty years ago that the British Empire in India and the Dutch Empire in Indonesia 'are the fruit of one tree, and the comprehension of either requires the study of the tree as a whole. . . . Anyone who imagines a motive for any European action in India during the 17th century without having studied the Dutch sources may be fairly confident that he is putting a noose round his neck, to be drawn tight by the first well-informed critic whom he meets; and these sources are certainly indispensable to anyone who wants to study the motives which actuated visitors of all Western nations' (*Journal of Indian History*, May, 1923, pp. 222 ff.). Both of these empires have now gone the way of all flesh, but students of colonial and of Asian history will be grateful to Professor Coolhaas for completing the task begun by Dr H. T. Colenbrander in 1919. The first six volumes of this series were published in 1919-34 (The Hague. M. Nijhoff. Vols. 1-5, are still available at fl. 25 each; Vol. VI is out of print), but Colenbrander only printed Coen's own letters and those addressed to him by the Directors of the Dutch East-India Company in Holland. The present two very bulky volumes comprise the unpublished letters addressed to him by his colleagues and subordinates in all the Dutch trading-posts in Asia from Japan to the Red Sea. They cover the years 1614-24 and 1627-9, and as may easily be imagined, the harvest is rich indeed.

Readers of the late Sir William Foster's invaluable series, *The English Factories in India, 1618-1699* (3 vols., Oxford University Press, 1906-09), will find in these two Dutch volumes an abundance of information about how things looked to the men 'on the other side of the hill'. The operations, quarrels and achievements of the Anglo-Dutch 'fleets of defence' in 1620-4, are here recorded from the Dutch side and form a useful check upon the English version. The Dutch Factors always kept a careful watch on their Portuguese and English rivals, whose doings they fully reported to their own superiors at Batavia. We can often find in these Dutch records, allusions to the movements of Portuguese and/or English shipping which supplement the details given in Foster, Botelho de Sousa, etc. Moreover, Coen had a very lively sense of sea-power and was ruthless in his use of it. On one occasion at least he overreached himself, when he tried to compel the Chinese to trade with the Dutch by harrying their commerce with Manila and blockade, or rather attempting to blockade, the coastal province of Fukien.

It is obvious that maritime and commercial matters bulk more largely in this correspondence than anything else. The fact that so many of these letters have been preserved (and are now published) enables us to appreciate the information which was available to Coen at Batavia, and helps us to understand why he made the decisions which he did. The works of Sir William Foster and Pandit Pissurlencar have given us copious selections from the English and Portuguese records of this period, so that the interested reader can now clearly see the course of the struggle for maritime supremacy in Asian waters in the seventeenth century, and can see it whole. It is, perhaps, not entirely unconnected with the outcome, that the Dutch records are the fullest, the most systematic, and (generally speaking) the most informative of the three.

Professor Coolhaas has been more generous with his notes than was Dr Colenbrander, and his identifications of all the Dutch personages mentioned in the correspondence is remarkably complete. Nevertheless, the annotation, although sufficient, is not so voluminous as to justify its being relegated to the end of each volume, instead of being printed at the foot of the page, which would have been handier for the serious student—and nobody else is likely to open a work of this kind.



There are no maps of any sort, which is both regrettable and surprising, and the index is disappointing, being merely strings of page-numbers after each entry. This sort of work needs indexing methodically in the way that Foster's *English Factories* was done. These criticisms (and the unhandy format) apart, editor and publisher can be congratulated on an excellent piece of work.

C. R. BOXER

### KRONBORG MUSEUM—YEARBOOKS, 1942-1954.

These publications of the Danish 'Museum of Trade and Seafaring' in Kronborg Castle, Elsinore, are more important than one would expect from their modest title. On a smaller scale they are like our own Annual Reports of some twenty years ago, when they contained lists of acquisitions by the National Maritime Museum, with a selection of articles from *The Mariner's Mirror* thrown in. Kronborg Museum is ideally situated, well housed and very well arranged; its Yearbooks are worthy of the Museum itself and its rapidly expanding collections.

R. C. ANDERSON

### DAGBOG FRA EN OSTINDIEFART, 1672-1675. By J. P. CORTEMUNDE. Edited by Henning Henningsen. Kronborg Museum, 1953.

Cortemunde was the Surgeon of the *Oldenborg*, a former Danish man-of-war, lent and afterwards given to the Danish East India Company. His journal of a voyage to Java and back was written in German, but has now been translated into Danish. It may be compared with those of Barlow and De Graaf (see *M.M.*, 1931, p. 303); Barlow was actually in Batavia at the same time as Cortemunde, but as a prisoner of war; De Graaf was there both earlier and later.

While ashore at Cape Town Cortemunde was involved in a brawl and wounded a Dutch resident. He was at first sentenced to lose his right hand with some years of forced labour to follow, but this was at once modified to a fine and three keel-haulings. Unfortunately, all that he tells us is that 'the execution was carried out once' and was followed by a complimentary dinner! An account of keel-hauling from the victim's point of view would have been interesting.

Cortemunde could not draw as well as Barlow, but he did his best and certainly gives us a good idea of his ship's appearance. One curious thing about his drawings is that he only once shows the spritsail topsail in use, when the *Oldenborg* was in difficulties among the Faroes, a most unlikely time to set it.

R. C. ANDERSON



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